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Full Name of Author — Nom complet de l'auteur

Randall Hatfield

Date of Birth — Date de naissance

July 1, 1956

Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance

Canada

Permanent Address — Résidence fixe

#609 11307 - 99 Ave

Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse

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Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse

James Lightbody

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The Metropolitan Development of Edmonton: The City, The Province and the Strategy of Neglect

by

(C) Randall Hatfield

A THESIS

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(SIGNED) Randall Hatfield

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

#609 11307 99 Ave.

Edmonton, Alberta

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DATED October 14 1982

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled *The Metropolitan Development of Edmonton: The City, The Province and the Strategy of Neglect* submitted by Randall Hatfield in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Supervisor

Date October 14, 1982

Abstract

This case study of Edmonton's metropolitan development sets out to determine what strategies, if any, have been devised by both Social Credit and Progressive Conservative governments to respond to pressure for an integration of the Edmonton mstropolitan area. Since 1956 a royal commission, a task force, a lengthy and detailed hearing of the Local Authorities Board, specially hired consultants, and the staff of the City of Edmonton have recommended an integration of the Edmonton area. Each has met with a singular lack of success.

Chapter one highlights approaches taken by authorities in the United States and Great Britain to the question of metroplitan reorganization. While the structure of local government in Canada has been influenced by both of these countries it is recognized that any discussion of local government reform must take into account the role of the provincial level of government. Accordingly, chapter two examines the role of provincial governments in the reorganization of Canada's major urban areas. Comparitive experience suggests that metropolitan reorganization has consistently proven to be one of those issue arenas in which provincial governments must define a policy stance.

Chapters three and four examine in detail the response of successive provincial administrations to recommendations for a governmental consolidation of the Edmonton area. On the basis of government documents, newspaper accounts, and personal interviews it is argued that benign indifference on the part of Social Credit governments and calculated neglect on the part of Progressive Conservative governments best describe the strategies of the administrations.

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my advisor, Jim Lightbody, who introduced me to Edmonton's metropolitan odyssey and endured several drafts before the final copy. His helpful comments, accessibility, and encouragement are very much appreciated. I would also like to thank the other members of my committee, Dr. Jack Masson and Dr. Peter Smith. Thanks also go to Lorne Buhr of the Legislature Library for his assistance in locating information on former provincial governments and to those who, through personal interviews, provided additional insights.

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I. Approaches to Metropolitan Reorganization

A. Introduction

In this thesis I intend to investigate the approaches of provincial governments to metropolitan reorganization. The primary investigation will comprise a case study of the Edmonton subregion since 1947. Unlike other metropolitan centers in Canada, the Edmonton area has witnessed little provincial initiative in structural integration. Comparative experience suggests that the several other provinces considered have all found it necessary to devise a 'metropolitan strategy'. Moreover, of the factors generally inhibiting governmental consolidation, few have been extant in the Edmonton case. This thesis will therefore attempt to explain the motives behind the apparent inattention of Alberta provincial governments with respect to local government integration in the Edmonton region. Ultimately, this 'strategy' forced the modest tinkering of 1981.

The massive urbanization that the western world has experienced in the twentieth century has resulted in large metropolitan areas which often lack the governmental structure to cope with pressures associated with growth. Students of local government and urban politics have devoted considerable attention to identifying the 'problems' of metropolitan areas and to stressing the need for developing mechanisms to coordinate efforts aimed at correcting those problems.[1] The 'metropolitan problem' stems largely from the fact that rapidly developed areas have failed to respect existing municipal boundaries.[2]

Systems of local government were established when the bulk of the population was rural and the distinction between urban and rural communities was clear-cut. Each town was a clearly recognizable entity and the rural areas were also for the most part separate and distinct regions, each with a highly

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[1] N.H. Lithwick, *Urban Canada: Problems and Prospects* (Ottawa: Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1970), pp.19-30, 213-236.

[2] O.P. Williams et al., "What is a Metropolitan Problem?" in *Urban Government*, ed. Edward C. Banfield (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 137. They identify the problems arising from the coincidence of spatial specialization and autonomous local governing units as: a) the maintenance of basic services, b) the unequal distribution of resources and services that result from the process of specialization, c) border relationships.

developed local character. The relative simplicity of the whole economy, the absence of any marked economic interdependence between local areas, and the existence of a local consciousness, were conducive to the concept of a separate local government for each area: each looked after its own affairs and was not greatly interested in or affected by the affairs of others.

Technological advances in the transportation and communication fields served to urbanize the rural areas adjoining cities by promoting an outward drift of population and industry. This trend was accelerated by the post-war boom. Whereas municipal boundaries had once separated relatively distinct units, the boundaries within metropolitan areas became artificial. Fragmented decision-making authority combined with limited fiscal resources and, in the case of Canada and the U.K., constitutional subordination to higher levels of government severely limited the capacity of local units of government to seek appropriate responses to area-wide problems.

The adjustment of municipal boundaries and the reorganization of jurisdictions are solutions that have been offered to overcome the negative externalities of urbanization.[3] Metropolitan reorganization or, as some authors suggest, metropolitan political integration,[4] refers to the development of new political machinery to foster or coerce co-operation. The various approaches to metropolitan reorganization vary significantly in their structural characteristics. They range from loose voluntary agreements to rigid single-tier governments with clearly delineated functions and responsibilities. The debate over the 'best' approach to governing metropolitan areas is ongoing.[5] Proponents of various schemes arm themselves with economic and organizational arguments. A sampling of the literature illustrates the wide differences of opinion that exist among academics and actors in metropolitan reform. Those in favor of a decentralized

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[3] For one of the earliest accounts see Paul Studenski, *The Government of Metropolitan Areas in the United States* (New York: National Municipal League, 1930; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1974), pp. 41-42.

[4] Willis D. Hawley, "On Understanding Metropolitan Political Integration,", in W.D. Hawley and M. Lipsey et al., eds. *Theoretical Perspectives on Urban Politics* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1976), pp. 101-102.

[5] J.F. Zimmerman, "The Metropolitan Governance Maze in the United States," paper presented to the 64th Annual Governmental Research Association Conference, Toronto, Ontario, 21 August, 1978.

structure, for example, argue along the following lines:

> Contrary to the frequent assertion about the lack of a 'metropolitan framework' for dealing with metropolitan problems, most metropolitan areas have a very rich and intricate 'framework' for negotiating, adjudicating, and deciding questions that affect their diverse public interests...[6]

Those favouring greater governmental consolidation harbour different sentiments:

> When each jurisdiction goes its own separate way, urban sprawl continues, with its companions of spreading blight, cheap commercial developments along major highways, inadequate parks, congested schools, mediocre administration, smog, traffic jams, recurrent crises in mass transportation, and the hundred and one irritations of undirected growth... In the place of a coordinated attack on the less attractive by-products of urbanization, each jurisdiction tries to avoid the conditions it regards as unpalatable, to protect its own, and to let neighbours fend for themselves. When local government disclaims responsibilities for the regional environment, the capacity to realize the potential of that environment is irrevocably lost.[7]

Thus the battle is joined.

In the remainder of this chapter we will examine some American and British efforts to reconcile these opposing approaches to metropolitan reorganization, describe the Canadian setting, and conclude with a note on the areas to be explored in this thesis. This investigation is not meant to be an exhaustive treatment, but rather suggestive of the alternative governmental forms employed in the metropolitan areas of other governmental jurisdictions which could conceivably be employed in Canada.

B. The American Experience

The various structures presently employed in the organization of metropolitan areas in the United States reflect these differences of opinion. Basically, these mechanisms can be grouped under three headings: voluntary arrangements, two-tier federations, or single-tier jurisdictions.[8]

The most recent (and least formal) structure devised to foster co-operation in metropolitan areas is the Council of Governments (COGs).

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[6] V. Ostrom, C.M. Tiebout, and R. Warren, "In Defence of the Polycentric Metropolis," in *Metropolitan Politics*, ed. M.N. Danielson, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1971), p. 241.

[7] R.C. Wood, "Metropolis Against Itself," in *Metropolitan Politics*, ed. M.N. Danielson, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1971), p. 244.

[8] A comprehensive chapter is devoted to each of these headings in J.C. Bollens and H.J. Schmandt, *The Metropolis*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp. 237-309.

Originally formed in the 1950s, these associations have increased in popularity over the last two decades. COGs are completely voluntary; the membership is generally composed of elected officials of general purpose governments in the metropolitan area. It has been suggested that these pioneering bodies all came into being for one or both of two reasons: a belief that collaborative governmental decisions were necessary to deal with area-wide problems and a fear that local units were about to lose power to proposed metropolitan governments.[9] It has also been pointed out that changes to federal legislation which enabled COGs to receive grants was a principal reason for the growth in the number of these agencies.[10] Many federal grants-in-aid programs required that a regional planning agency review and comment upon application for certain funds. When federal housing legislation was amended in 1965 to authorize COGs as legitimate review agencies, and the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Act of 1966 continued this trend, the popularity of these politically palatable associations grew. Units of government which chose not to join ended up with neither funds nor a voice in the funding of their own or member jurisdictions.[11]

As one might expect, there are differences of opinion with respect to the effectiveness of Councils of Government. Proponents of more centralized forms of metropolitan integration argue that COGs lack the ability to enforce programs and that they serve to protect and entrench the *status quo*.[12] Supporters of COGs contend that the arrangements provide a forum for identification and discussion of the problems of the area and for mediation and negotiation among members.[13]

Intergovernmental agreements must also be considered in a discussion of voluntary mechanisms found in metropolitan areas. These are arrangements under which a local community conducts an activity jointly or cooperatively with one

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[9] Ibid., p. 304.
[10] James F. Horan and G.Thomas Taylor Jr., *Experiments in Metropolitan Government* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), pp. 155-156.
[11] Bollens and Schmandt, p. 306.
[12] Horan and Taylor, p.159.
[13] Ibid., p. 158.

or more other governmental units, or contracts for its performance by another governmental unit.[14] In theory, a metropolitan area may therefore have functional consolidation without political consolidation.[15] An extreme form of contracting is used by many California cities. This procedure has become known as the Lakewood plan, since Lakewood on becoming a city in 1954 contracted to have practically all of its governmental services provided by Los Angeles County. A typical range of services offered by the county includes police services, fire protection, engineering services, street construction and maintenance, animal regulation, planning and zoning, public health, and emergency animal services.[16]

Economists have been quick to point out the merits of the Contract Services Plan. Intergovernmental agreements, they claim, have brought lower prices and consequently forced cost-saving innovations among public producers. Small cities receive benefits from lower cost production. They are also able to adjust service levels to meet the needs of their citizens:

> It appears that contract systems contain within them incentives for responsiveness to diverse preferences, incentives to keep costs of production down, and an ability to adopt production economies to produce diverse public goods and services more efficiently.[17]

The Contract Services Plan, however, is not without its critics. While contracting does provide decent levels of service to the participating local entities, it also restricts their freedom of action, severely limits the alternatives open to their leaders in many fields, forces them to bargain with the county for changes in policy, and compels them to operate within the narrow constraints of the contract plan. Complete control over service policy is the price contract cities must pay for the benefit of incorporation. As well, there

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[14] Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, *Metropolitan America: Challenge to Federalism* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 87.

[15] See Vincent Ostrom, Charles Tiebout, and Robert Warren, "The Organization of Government in Metropolitan Areas: A Theoretical Inquiry," *American Political Science Review*, 55 (December, 1961), pp. 831-842.

[16] For a complete list of services offered, see R.M. Cion, "Accomodation Par Excellance: The Lakewood Plan," in *Metropolitan Politics*, ed. M.N. Danielson, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1971), p. 225. The classic defence of the scheme is offered in R.L. Bish, *The Public Economy of Metropolitan Areas* (Chicago: Rand McNally/Markham, 1971).

[17] R.L. Bish and H.O. Nourse, *Urban Economics and Policy Analysis* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), p. 210.

is the question as to how effective the system is for metropolitan *area* governance: it is often the region whose interests are forgotten at the bargaining table.[18]

More formal means of reconciling area-wide problems include two level approaches. The most significant of these is known as metropolitan federation where existing units of government are left substantially unchanged, or are subjected to only partial modifications, while an entirely new level of metropolitan-wide government is created in an effort to provide comprehensive planning and coordination of major services. The more prominent examples of metropolitan federation in the world today include Tokyo, Toronto, Paris, and London.[19]

The two level approach also includes two other structures. Both are less formal than metropolitan federation. The first to be considered is the urban county. This arrangement involves giving the county responsibility for a significant number of urban services throughout all or part of its jurisdiction. Despite the drawback that metropolitan areas do not often respect county boundaries, the plan is appealing in that it does not require the creation of another unit of government. There exist, nevertheless, several formidable barriers to the establishment of comprehensive urban counties. These barriers include the need in many cases to amend state constitutions, the implied elimination of bureaucratic positions, the need to create new electoral district lines, and the difficult task of reassigning administrative functions and responsibilities.[20] These barriers have been significant in blocking reorganizations in all but Dade County in Florida.[21]

The mildest version of the two level approach is the metropolitan district. This arrangement consists of the creation of an independent unit of government to perform one or a few urban functions throughout a metropolitan area. The

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[18] Cion, pp. 226-228.
[19] For an international perspective see F. Smallwood, "Metropolitan Political Systems and the Administrative Process," in *Metropolitan Problems*, ed. S.R. Miles (Toronto: Methuen, 1970), pp. 337-339.
[20] Bollens and Schmandt, pp. 271-272.
[21] Horan and Taylor, p. xvii.

most common activities performed by metropolitan districts include the co-ordination and planning for port facilities, sewage disposal, airports, mass transit, parks, housing, and water supply.[22] It has been suggested that the main reason for its extensive use is the high degree of political feasibility associated with these arrangements.[23] Only a minor threat is posed to existing political units by the removal of a function previously performed by local governments. So, although the concept of two-tier federation was pioneered in the United States it has been most successfully introduced abroad.

The most radical means of restructuring local government involves the use of annexation and consolidation to create or maintain a single-tier jurisdiction. Proponents of unified metropolitan areas argue that a centralized structure is a more efficient, economical, and effective way of handling public affairs and functions. Annexation was traditionally the most common method for adjusting the boundaries of local governments in the urban and metropolitan areas of the United States. This procedure, however, has become more and more difficult as fringe areas have incorporated and amendments to many state annexation laws have made it difficult to annex any but unincorporated areas. Moreover, the American concept of 'home rule' poses a powerful constitutional barrier to annexation. Consolidation refers to the merger of incorporated places. This technique is also well known for its marked lack of success. Again, the legal barriers are prohibitive; in 1959 only twenty states were reported to have general statutes authorizing consolidations, and these varied with respect to permitting cities, villages, or towns to consolidate.[24]

An even broader one government approach than either annexation or consolidation is city-county consolidation. As the phrase implies, this mechanism refers to the merger of a county and the cities within it into a single government. Obstacles that stand in the way of this reorganization method are numerous. As noted earlier, many state constitutions do not authorize

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[22] Bollens and Schmandt, p. 264.
[23] Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, *Metropolitan America: Challenge to Federalism*, p. 95.
[24] Ibid., p. 100.

consolidations; frequently there is a requirement of separate majorities in a popular referendum in both the central city and the rest of the county; and since a consolidation clearly is a threat to the positions of numerous officials and employees, support from within the bureaucracies of the affected jurisdictions is often limited.

The record of American reform accomplishments has not been particularly impressive (less than one in four of the 45 comprehensive proposals between 1945 and 1970 were implemented).[25] The process of governmental reform in the United States usually requires a referendum on the proposed structural change. With relatively few exceptions, reorganization proposals have been rejected by voters who apparently have been influenced more by arguments promising to keep the tax rate low, the government close to the people and free from corruption (the values cherished by those who oppose integration) than by arguments stressing the correction of service inadequacies and the economical and efficient provision of services.[26] Harsh political calculations by community leaders have also imposed a roadblock for centripetal reorganization. It appears that the quest for a solution to metropolitan problems is a quest for a governmental structure as politically acceptable as a voluntary mechanism and yet as comprehensive as consolidation.[27]

Several frameworks have been developed, based on the American experience, which attempt to outline the factors which facilitate or impede metropolitan integration.[28] It was found, for example, that annexations were most successful in young urbanized areas where social differentials between city and suburb were not substantial.[29] Normally the most comprehensive proposals for

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[25] Bollens and Schmandt, p. 314.
[26] J.F. Zimmerman, "Metropolitan Reform in the United States - An Overview," *Public Administration Review* 30 (1970), p. 531.
[27] Williams *et al.*, p. 142.
[28] Hawley, p. 101. He suggests that the development of new political structures is a function of the need to engage in collective action, the perceived desirability of acting collectively, and the difficulties of achieving such action. See also J.F. Zimmerman, p. 535.; Rosenbaum and Henderson, "Explaining Comprehensive Governmental Consolidation: Toward a Preliminary Theory," *Journal of Politics* 34 (1972), pp. 445-457.
[29] Thomas R. Dye, "Urban Political Integration: Conditions Associated with Annexations in American Cities," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 8 (November, 1964), pp. 445-446.

metropolitan reorganization meet more opposition than less radical proposals, and as a result, are not likely to succeed as F. Smallwood so aptly put it, "the supporters of re-organization are generally fighting for *marginal* gains."[30] The opposition to institutional change has been characterized as "the *status quo* mobilized."[31] The recent granting of review functions for federal grants to voluntary agencies like COGs has also served to remove a major impetus to radical reform. In very practical, political, terms the governmentally fragmented metropolitan area institutionalizes inequality in social and economic terms.[32] As demonstrated by the American track record, attempts to disrupt such a 'mobilization of bias' are near impossible tasks.

The American experience provides us with basically three schools of thought for examining metropolitan reorganization: that of the 'centralists', the 'federationists', and the 'polycentrists'. As well, reform efforts south of the border demonstrate the weakness of the congressional model in dealing with metropolitan boundaries. Above all, the American background suggests that, in order to investigate the Canadian experience properly, we determine the factors which facilitate or impede metropolitan consolidation recognizing that, in the U.S. at least, it takes only a few vocal opponents to quash ambitious reforms.

C. The British Experience

A discussion of local government reorganization in Great Britain must begin with an appreciation of British politics. The unitary structure of British political organization, its parliamentary form of government, and its disciplined yet ideologically diverse two-party system combine to produce a system "with a decision making capacity that is probably unequalled among the industrial

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[30] Frank Smallwood, "The Politics of Regional Government," in *Politics and Government of Urban Government*, ed. L.D. Feldman and M.D. Goldrick, 3rd. ed. (Toronto: Methuen, 1976), p. 336.
[31] Scott Greer, *Metro-Politics: A Study of Political Culture* (New York: John Wiley, 1963), p. 32.
[32] See Richard C. Hill, "Separate and Unequal: Governmental Inequality in the Metropolis," *American Political Science Review* LXVIII, 4 (1974), pp. 1557-1568. Norton Long, "Political Science and the City," in L.F. Schnore, ed., *Social Science and the City* (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 247.

democracies."[33] Indeed, the absence of state or provincial governments places ultimate responsibility for local government with parliament. The passage of the London Government Act in 1963 and the Local Government Act in 1972 both illustrates the nature of local government reform in Great Britain and demonstrates the necessity for parliamentary parties to devise a 'metropolitan governance strategy.' In both cases royal commissions were established and their subsequent reports formed the basis for legislation.

The creation of the Greater London Council in 1963 is perhaps the most widely recognized endeavour by the national government to restructure its local units. The problem of governmental fragmentation, which has characterized metropolitan areas in the United States, was also evident in greater London. As one observer noted:

> It looked to be a bewildering myriad of quasi-independent and often competing, local units - urban districts, metropolitan boroughs, municipal boroughs, county boroughs, administrative counties, special boards, special authorities, and special commissions - that were expected to be guided by some unspecified 'invisible hand' in a manner that would enable them to plan and implement a coherent, comprehensive, and unified public policy for the entire Greater London metropolis.[34]

Accordingly, the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London was established by the Conservative government in 1957. Three years later the commission released its report which recommended a major reorganization of the existing structure through the creation of a two-tier government.

The white paper of 1961 was not universally acclaimed. In a manner somewhat reminiscent of the American tradition, the proponents and opponents of the bill waged an ongoing battle.[35] The chief difference between the reform of local government in London and the typical American metropolitan area was the manner in which the final decision was made. As Smallwood points out: "In London, the issue of metropolitan reorganization was ultimately decided by a higher governmental authority, rather than by means of any direct public

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[33] D.E. Ashford, "The Limits of Consensus: The Reorganization of British Local Government and the French Contrast," in *Territorial Politics in Industrial Nations*, ed. S. Tarrow et al. (New York: Praeger, 1978), p. 246.
[34] Frank Smallwood, *Greater London: The Politics of Metropolitan Reform* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co. Inc., 1965), p. 74.
[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 171-227.

referendum."[36]

The Local Government Act of 1972 typifies the degree of responsibility and amount of control that is present in Westminster and the need for a carefully considered plan of attack. The Royal Commission on Local Government which led to the act had been the most remarkable in the twentieth century:

> It held in three years the most meetings, 181; it received evidence from the most witnesses, 2156; it was the most expensive, L378,851; it undertook and commissioned the most research; and it produced the longest report, three volumes of over 1,000 pages. If ever a topic had received a thorough and authoritative examination then it was certainly local government in England.[37]

But, the subsequent white paper was not supported by the Conservative opposition and when the Labour government was defeated in June, 1970, their proposals, based on the Redcliffe-Maud Report, died with them.[38] The Conservative government strategy favoured a federated approach for governing the London area and this belief was expressed in legislation. With the passage of the Local Government Act in 1972, county councils and county boroughs were replaced with a nation-wide system of two-tier governments; county councils and county districts were created outside major built-up areas while metropolitan counties and districts were established in the heavily urbanized parts of England and Wales. The act also served to remove from the jurisdiction of local governments personal health services as well as water supply and sewage disposal functions.

Naturally, the proponents of the Local Government Act had their share of critics. The Labour opposition felt that the capacity of local government to carry out its functions effectively had been weakened through the splitting of responsibilities and that comprehensive planning would be more difficult to achieve because of the need to find coordinating mechanisms. The opponents of the royal commission had felt that the proposed recommendations would

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[36] *Ibid.*, p. 139.
[37] G.W.Jones, "The Local Government Act 1972 and the Redcliffe-Maud Commission," *Political Quarterly* 44 (April-June, 1973), p. 155.
[38] L.J. Sharpe, "Modernizing the Localities: Local Government in Britain and some Comparisons with France," in *Local Government in Britain and France*, ed. Jacques Lagroye and Vincent Wright (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979), p. 60.

reorganize local government, not reform it.[39] It is too early to provide a proper assessment of the new system which, in 1979, had only experienced two rounds of elections. There have been, however, a number of calls for further reform and another round of reorganization is possible in the near future.[40]

Nonetheless, for Canada the British experience suggests the importance of a central government strategy in ultimately determining metropolitan structure, the power of the parliamentary caucus in implementing the cabinet decision, and the use of royal commissions to defer a decision until a politically palatable policy stance has been determined. As well, British reforms demonstrate the important role of partisan differences in shaping the final institutional outcomes.

D. The Canadian Setting

As noted earlier, the structure of local government in Canada has been influenced by both the United States and Great Britain. While similarities can be found in comparing the reorganization of major urban areas, there are features which exist within the context of Canadian local government which render Canadian reform efforts unique despite the American or British influences. The most obvious difference concerns the legal setting of municipalities in this country.

Canadian municipalities are the creatures of the provinces. Section 92.8 of the British North American Act granted provincial legislatures exclusive rights to make laws in relation to 'municipal institutions in the Province.' Legally, the provincial governments may create or abolish municipalities, and add to or take away responsibilities that presently reside with units of local government. In the reorganization efforts of Canada's major metropolitan areas to be examined in detail in chapter II, it will be shown that provincial governments play the critical role in initiating the redefinition of municipal boundaries and responsibilities.

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[39] R.A.W. Rhodes, "Local Government Reform: Three Questions– What is Reorganization? What are the Effects of Reorganization? Why Reorganization?" *Social and Economic Administration* 8 (Spring, 1974) pp. 9–11.
[40] M. Goldsmith, "The Changing System of Local Government," in *Local Government in Britain and France*, ed. Jacques Lagroye and Vincent Wright (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979), p. 23.

Whereas state constitutions in the United States offer a degree of autonomy and protection to their municipalities, and the national government of Great Britain provides a strong central coordinating role, local governments in Canada look to their respective provincial governments for legitimacy and authority. Indeed, with ten municipal systems under provincial control, one might conceivably expect to find ten different approaches to metropolitan reorganization at the least.

The Canadian political culture has also been identified as one factor which helps to explain our different orientation to metropolitan reorganization. It has been suggested that our value orientations, which include a more elitist outlook and a tendency to respect leaders as well as government institutions, have helped to create a situation where our provincial governments can take advantage of their sweeping legal and jurisdictional powers.[41] Therefore, an outside observer might legitimately expect to find a high degree of provincial intervention and direction in the restructuring of municipal boundaries within its borders. It is this provincial initiative (or apparent lack of it on the part of Alberta administrations) that we intend to explore. Even though there will be unique circumstances in each Canadian metropolitan centre, we could hypothesize that provincial administrations will initiate reorganizations where they perceive successful solutions elsewhere to problems similar to those they themselves confront. Indeed, the metropolitan question has become a matter of such significance in the post war period that the provinces have each been forced to devise a strategy to deal with them. That successive Alberta governments have consistently refused to accept alternatives outlined before them represents a significant departure from the interventionist strategies of the other provinces to be examined below.

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[41] Hugh Whalen, "Democracy and Local Government," *Canadian Public Administration*, (March, 1960), p. 5. Frank Smallwood, "Guiding Urban Change," *National Civic Review*, (April, 1965), pp. 193-197.

E. Dimensions for Analysis

Arguments based on efficiency, economies of scale, and rationality in land-use planning are not usually sufficient to generate a successful reorganization of local government. In contrast to the United States, the limited legal and jurisdictional powers of Canadian municipalities has resulted in a situation where political considerations at the inter-governmental level are as important as local political factors in determining the success or the failure of any given reorganization plan. Highlighting this consideration, Frank Smallwood has developed several crude formulae which suggest that there is a direct positive correlation between the potential comprehensiveness of regional governmental structures and both the degree of political support by higher levels of government and the lack of opposition among the affected units of local government. In other words:

> If the observer's political evaluation indicates that potential political support by higher levels of government is very strong, and that there is virtually no internal opposition to reorganization, it is feasible to propose very ambitious plans for regional government reorganization.[42]

As an indicator of the prospects of a major reorganization it is a formula which is rather pessimistic. Therefore, the significant role that the NDP provincial government played in the reorganization of Metro Winnipeg has led one student of local government to suggest that the conventional formula for ambitious reorganization plans should be altered to account for the political ideology of the reforming authorities.[43] Indeed, a left of centre government committed to uniform tax rates and equal access to services would be far more likely to accept unification and the resulting reduction in fiscal inequities in the face of significant opposition than a party of the centre. Quite simply, while the impetus to reform may emerge from purely local issues and problems, the success or failure of reorganization efforts in Canada is very much dependent on the attitudes of the provincial governments. This ideological component will not be underestimated.

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[42] Frank Smallwood, "The Politics of Regional Government," p. 341.
[43] J. Lightbody, "The Reform of a Metropolitan Government: The Case of Winnipeg, 1971," *Canadian Public Policy* 4, vol. iv, (Autumn, 1978), pp. 103-139.

Unlike other provincial governments, successive Alberta administrations representing two political traditions have shown little initiative in restructuring boundaries in their major metropolitan areas. Since 1947 the Edmonton and Calgary areas have experienced a substantial influx of both people and capital. The attendant growth and prosperity in the regions resulted in a spillover of residential, commercial, and industrial activity into land outside the formal boundaries of Edmonton and Calgary.

Despite the McNally Royal Commission in 1956 which considered the Canadian metropolitan alternatives and firmly recommended an extension of Edmonton's boundaries to encompass the metropolitan area, and subsequent appeals by the city to the province to that effect, the province has not been overtly responsive to reorganization proposals. In fact, it would appear that there has existed, to the 1980s, a policy vacuum with respect to the structure of local government in the region. But, at the same time, the many ad hoc, piecemeal annexations that were permitted in the metropolitan Edmonton area in the last quarter of a century, together with consistent provincial attempts to defer a comprehensive settlement, suggest the existence of a determined policy stance. Whether this is so or not is the object of our inquiry.

Accordingly, in chapter two we will examine the reorganizations that have occurred in Canada's major metropolitan areas with particular reference to the role of the provincial governments. The obvious failure to intervene by Alberta provincial governments with respect to the governing of the Edmonton metropolitan region will be shown to be one of the most obvious departures from the comparative Canadian experience. Chapters three and four will trace the expansion of Edmonton's boundaries through annexations and amalgamations since 1956. Particular reference will be made to the response of Social Credit and Progressive Conservative administrations (respectively) to successive calls for a reorganization of local government in the Edmonton metropolitan region. The consequences of provincial abstinence will also be identified and reasons for this posture will be offered. It will be argued that the provincial position concerning the governing of the Edmonton metropolitan region reflects both

benign indifference and calculated neglect .

II. The Provinces and Metropolitan Reorganization in Canada

A. Introduction

In this chapter we will examine the governmental reorganization of Canada's major metropolitan areas. Of particular interest for this thesis is the role of the respective provinces in initiating, directing, and completing the redefinition of municipal boundaries. As urbanization has inexorably increased[44] and the problems associated with population spillover have occurred, the provinces have exercised their constitutional authority with varying degrees of commitment and initiative. Metropolitan reorganization is, however, a policy area that cannot be ignored by provincial governments and in each of the jurisdictions examined below it will be shown that a conscious strategy has existed for dealing with metropolitan boundaries and functions. We intend to investigate this dimension.

The impetus to reform of Canada's metropolitan areas has usually stemmed from a serious problem in the delivery of municipal services.[45] When fringe communities were rural they did not require the services provided in urban areas but, as they urbanized, certain basic services became a necessity. Urban areas require a municipal water supply, sewage facilities, streets and sidewalks, police and fire protection, health services, waste disposal, and so on. But urban fringe communities have generally unequal financial resources and there tend to be wide variations in tax rates and service levels within a metropolitan system.

The central city, having lost residents and businesses to the suburbs, is commonly faced with problems of urban renewal and redevelopment, transportation problems, planning problems, and with the need for providing services not only for its own residents but also for commuters residing and

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[44] In 1961 some 67.3 per cent of Canadians lived in an urban area whose population was at least 5000. Ten years later this proportion had reached 71.4 per cent; Economic Council of Canada, *Living Together: A Study of Regional Disparities* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1977), p. 123.

[45] C.R. Tindal and S.N. Tindal, *Local Government in Canada: An Introduction* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979), pp. 54; 68-70.

paying taxes in other jurisdictions.[46]

In Canada there have been three principal approaches to the problems of metropolitan development. They include:

a) Annexation by or amalgamation with the central city;

b) The establishment of special inter-municipal authorities to provide certain common services or ad hoc co-operative arrangements for particular purposes; and

c) The adoption of the principle of "federation" under which an over-all metropolitan authority is created with jurisdiction over matters of general concern while the local municipalities retain jurisdiction over matters of local concern.

For many years the annexation of adjoining areas was the normal process by which growing cities provided for their expanding population. Both Montreal and Toronto extended their territories in this way until the First World War. By successive annexations of adjacent municipalities, the City of Montreal increased its area five times between 1883 and 1919,[47] and Toronto increased its area two and a half times by the same process over a period of eighty years ending in 1912.[48]

These annexations or amalgamations, while reflecting the problems of metropolitan areas, were not in all cases effected in order to adapt local boundaries to the realities of growth. In some cases, such as the Montreal area, the annexation was more or less forced upon the central city by the debts incurred by the suburban municipalities through the unplanned development of housing and municipal services. In the case of Toronto, too, the areas annexed had already been largely built-up and provided with certain municipal services,

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[46] This latter notion of suburban-urban exploitation is a matter of contention. Notable economists have drawn conflicting conclusions. See for example, John C. Weicher, "The Effects of Metropolitan Political Fragmentation on Central City Budgets," in D.C. Sweet, ed. *Models of Urban Structure* (Lexington, Mass.: Heath, 1972), pp. 177-203.; William B. Neenan, "Suburban-Central City Exploitation Thesis: One City's Tale," *National Tax Journal*, 23 (1970), p. 139.; Woo Sik Kee, "Central City Expenditures and Metropolitan Areas," *National Tax Journal*, 18 (1965), p. 339.

[47] George A. Nader, *Cities of Canada*, vol. 2 (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), p. 161.

[48] Ibid, p. 209.

many of which had been badly planned and were far below minimum city standards. The approach to annexation and amalgamation in the earlier years of the century was therefore different from what it is today. Annexation was not then looked at from the standpoint of the city's growth requirements but rather was considered a privilege to be conferred by the city upon the inhabitants of the fringe communities.

Accordingly, after 1910, the City of Montreal opposed further annexations on the ground that the additional costs created by each outside area annexed exceeded the new revenue sources made available.[49] Toronto, likewise, ended its policy of annexation around 1914.[50] Consequently, other alternatives for the management of metropolitan growth were required.

B. Montreal

Financial problems provided the impetus for the creation of the first metropolitan authority in the Montreal region. In 1921 four municipalities on the island were carrying a tremendous debt load and requested annexation to the city. Montreal responded by agreeing subject to the incorporation of the other island municipalities with it. When the more wealthy local governments balked, Montreal withdrew its support for the annexations. Later that year the provincial government stepped in and established the Island of Montreal Metropolitan Commission.[51] The commission was made up of eight representatives from the city, six representing fourteen inner suburbs, and one non-voting representative from the Department of Municipal Affairs.[52]

The commission was assigned a rather limited role; it was to restore the financial position of the four financially plagued municipalities and to control the financial operations of the other municipalities except Montreal.[53] The commission

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[49] Jean Godin, "Local Government Reform in the Province of Quebec," *A Look to the North*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974), p. 54.
[50] Nader, p. 210.
[51] Kenneth G. Crawford, *Canadian Municipal Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954), pp. 134-135.
[52] Andrew Sancton, "The Impact of Language Differences on Metropolitan Reform in Montreal," *Canadian Public Administration*, xxii, 2 (Summer, 1979), p. 231.
[53] Godin, pp. 54-55.

remained in existence for 38 years but never managed to reconcile the increasing number of inter-municipal problems brought on by population growth.

In 1959 the province once again attempted to redress the problems of fragmentation through the creation of the Montreal Metropolitan Corporation, a form of two-tier government. The ten year existence of this body was characterized by internal difficulties. Montreal lost the majority on the commission which it had earlier enjoyed and continually pressed for more powers and responsibilities. Of the twenty-nine corporation members it had only fourteen nominees, the same number as the suburbs, and the provincial government appointed the last member to control the decision in case of a tie vote.[54] With its influence usurped, the city consistently refused any form of cooperation and the Montreal Metropolitan Corporation was effectively neutralized.[55]

During the 1960s successive Liberal and Union Nationale governments recognized a growing need to reform the structure of local government throughout the province. Not only did the larger urban areas face an increasing number of jurisdictional problems, but the plethora of smaller local entities were experiencing mounting servicing problems. In 1965 the Liberal provincial government imposed amigamation on the thirteen municipalities of Ile Jesus to form the municipality of Laval. Also, in the same year, the government passed the Voluntary Amalgamation Act which allowed two or more municipalities to amalgamate following a council's resolution to that effect. Although the actual results of the legislation were far from spectacular, the province demonstrated a comitment to reduce the number of municipalities through revisions to the original act.[56] Outside Quebec's major urban areas, however, the pace of reform has been moderate. The province's dualities, which include rural-urban, traditional-modern, rich-poor, and French-English dimensions have been identified as inhibiting factors.[57]

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[54] Godin, p. 56.
[55] Sancton, p. 232.
[56] Godin, p. 67.
[57] *Ibid*, p. 68.

The decision making stalemate that plagued the Montreal Metropolitan Corporation provided the impetus for further provincial initiatives. In 1964, Camille Blier was appointed chairman of a three man committee to study the Montreal area. The two other members of the committee were Lucien Saulnier, Montreal Mayor Drapeau's principal lieutenant, and Reginald Dawson, the mayor of Mount Royal and an ardent protector of suburban interests. The committee was instructed to produce a unanimous report; to no one's surprise, it was "a masterpiece of ambiguity".[58] Amalgamation of the island municipalities, although desirable, was politically impossible. Instead, the committee recommended the creation of the Montreal General Council. The City of Montreal would enjoy a majority on this new body which would eventually coordinate several major functions, including social welfare, regional planning, police and public transportation. The Liberal government, however, was defeated in 1966 and the Blier Report was never implemented.[59]

The new Union Nationale government was predominantly rural based and had little interest in urban reform. Officials in the Department of Municipal Affairs moved to fill the void. In 1967 the Provincial Planning Board released the La Haye report which favoured a regional level of government. This was followed in 1968-69 with the release of a comparative study on metropolitan government by the department which concluded that urban communities should be established in the province. The creation of similar communities in several metropolitan areas in France apparently sparked the interest of provincial civil servants.[60] During this same period regional governmental reforms were taking place in Ontario. In June, 1969, the minister tabled plans for the creation of 'communautes urbaines' in Montreal and Quebec City, and for a 'communaute regionale' in the Hull area. Strong opposition was voiced from Montreal; with the creation of a Montreal Urban Community as envisaged by the Department of Municipal Affairs, the city would be faced with losing a majority position on the new council. Drapeau's vocal opposition appeared to succeed. On September

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[58] Sancton, pp. 233-234.
[59] Godin, pp. 56-57.
[60] Sancton, pp. 234-235.

24, 1969, Dr. Lussier, the Minister of Municipal Affairs announced that the implementation of his plan would be postponed for one year.[61]

Unforseen events, however, were to alter the position of the opponents of 'communautes urbaines'. Although the City of Montreal had long advocated the unification of the entire island under a single jurisdiction, the one day police strike of October, 1969 forced the city to compromise with the provincial government and accept reform.[62] When the strike was settled, the costs had to be met. Montreal's strategy was "to promise to pay the police what they wanted and then to force the suburbs and the provincial government to finance the increases."[63] The Urban Community provided the most obvious vehicle for ensuring suburban contributions.

On December 23, 1969, the Montreal Urban Community Act was ratified. It has been suggested that the MUC was organized in a manner which makes it a mere extension of the City of Montreal.[64] The government is based on two structures. The council of 81 members comprises the mayor and the councillors of the City of Montreal as well as the mayor or one delegate from each of the municipalities in the community who are ex officio. The second structure is the executive committee comprised of 12 members. Seven of the members are from the City of Montreal while the other five are selected among the mayors or the delegates from the other municipalities of the Community.[65]

In the same year, legislation was passed which created the Quebec Urban Community and the Outaouais Regional Community. The province was clearly attempting to establish the beginning of a regional system of government. A system of representation along the lines of the MUC was followed and, although the list of powers and functions of the QUC and the ORC is not as comprehensive as that of the Montreal Urban Community, there is no legal barrier which would preclude the future adoption of more responsibilities.[66]

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[61] *Ibid*, p. 235.
[62] Godin, p. 60.
[63] Sancton, p. 236.
[64] *Ibid*, p. 236.
[65] Andre Bernard, Jacques Leveille and Guy Lord, *Profile: Montreal* (Ottawa: Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, 1974), p. 22-23.
[66] D.J.H. Higgins, *Urban Canada: Its Government and Politics*, (Toronto: Macmillan,

The Province of Quebec has presented municipal policy makers with historic, social, and cultural barriers that are not found in other provinces. Despite the 'duality' features of the province, however, successive governments have played a relatively active interventionalist role in reorganizing the major metropolitan area in the 1960s. The history of reform in the Montreal area shows us that while a soft service 'crisis' provided the impetus for change, the structure of government that evolved reflected a more comprehensive provincial strategy of decentralization. Ultimately, the establishment of the regional communities cemented this policy.

C. Metro Toronto and Regional Government in Ontario

The creation of the federated metropolitan municipality of Toronto in 1953 has long been heralded as Canada's boldest initiative in reorganizing local government. The principal reason offered by students of local government to explain political integration in metropolitan Toronto is the emergence, in the post-war period, of problems associated with the development of a sprawling metropolitan area. These problems were typical of other North American centers. There was a steady exodus of business firms and middle class citizens from the central city to the suburbs and a steady immigration of lower income families to the central city from elsewhere in the nation and from other countries. Virtually all growth in the area was in the suburbs.[67] It soon became apparent that the suburban municipalities were hard put to furnish a minimum level of essential services, principally water, sewerage, roads and education.

This crisis in the delivery of services, worsened by the fact that inter-municipal cooperation had proved difficult, led the City of Toronto in 1950 to apply to the Ontario Municipal Board for the amalgamation of the 13 municipalities within the region into one large unit. The OMB conducted hearings in 1951 and 1952. The metropolitan area was divided into three camps: the City of Toronto favored annexation of all surrounding municipalities; the outlying

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[66](cont'd)1977), pp. 135-136.

[67] T.J. Plunkett, "Structural Reform of Local Government in Canada," *Canadian Public Administration*, 33 (1973), p. 42.

rapidly growing suburbs, due to their poor financial and service situation, wanted a joint service area; and the inlying fully-developed suburbs who, with a relatively stable environment, favored the *status quo*.[68] In 1953, the OMB (chaired by L.R. Cumming) rejected both the joint service and annexation applications. Instead, it proposed that the thirteen municipalities of the Toronto area be joined in a metropolitan federation. Although considered a radical invention, the metropolitan federation appears to have been fashioned closely along the lines of county government in the rural areas of Ontario.

The Board's plan passed the legislature and the Metropolitan Toronto Act of 1953 went into effect in July of that year. The provincial role in the creation of Metro was obviously significant. It was up to the cabinet to accept or reject the Cumming Report; Premier Leslie Frost felt that federation was an acceptable political compromise.[69] The municipalities would retain their existence, albeit with reduced responsibilities, and area-wide concerns could be addressed by the metro council. These were to include assessment, debenture borrowing, water supply and trunk mains, sewage treatment works and trunk sewers, and designated metropolitan roads. The original metropolitan council consisted of 25 representatives: 12 from the city of Toronto, one from each of the other 12 municipalities, and a provincially appointed chairman.[70] The 13 municipalities were forced to go along with the legislation; "the city of Toronto remained opposed to the federal idea; the suburbs would only concede that it was better than amalgamation."[71]

Metro was successful in dealing with hard servicing problems.[72]

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[68] A. Rose, "Two Decades of Metropolitan Government in Toronto: 1953-1973," *A Look to the North*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974), pp. 4-5.

[69] H. Kaplan, *Urban Political Systems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 49.

[70] Metro's first chairman, Frederick Gardiner, is credited with playing a key role as 'gatekeeper' during its early years. Kaplan, pp. 70 -89. Also see: Timothy J. Colton, *Big Daddy: Frederick G. Gardiner and the Building of Metropolitan Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

[71] Kaplan, p.115.

[72] For a different perspective see: James Lorimer, *A Citizen's Guide to City Politics* (Toronto: James Lewis and Samuel, 1972), p. 90. Lorimer saw it all as a property developer plot. "While rationality and efficiency were the usual justification for two-level metropolitan government... in fact the main impact of this reform was to make possible the construction of major public works

Dissatisfaction existed, however, with respect to representation and in 1957 the provincial government called for a formal review of the federation. The Metropolitan Toronto Review Commission of Inquiry was headed by Lorne Cumming (the author of the original report recommending the two-tier system) and, to nobody's surprise, he suggested only cosmetic changes.

In 1957, a metropolitan police force was created and, soon after, further responsibilities were assumed by the upper tier. Toronto's neighboring municipalities began to fear a *de facto* amalgamation. Futhermore, the Cumming Report did not address the major concern of representation on the metro council. In short, the major points of contention that existed in 1957 remained unsolved. In 1963, the City of Toronto applied again to the Ontario Municipal Board for the amalgamation of the thirteen municipalities.[73]

The provincial government responded by bypassing the OMB and establishing a royal commission. Carl H. Goldenberg, the sole commissioner, reported almost two years later. The report contained several important recommendations: firstly, it advocated the retention and strengthening of the two-tier federation; secondly, it suggested that the number of municipalities be reduced to four; and, finally, it advocated the expansion of Metro's jurisdiction into education, welfare, and solid waste disposal. The provincial government passed legislation in 1966 to reorganize Metro Toronto in 1967. The federation was maintained but the thirteen municipalities were consolidated into six boroughs rather than four cities. Representation was made more equitable and provisions for another review were made.[74]

In 1974 the province, through an order-in-council, appointed former Premier John Robarts to "examine, evaluate and make appropriate recommendations on the structure, organization and operations of the local government within the Metropolitan Toronto area."[75] The commission studied 14

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[72](cont'd)programs...which the property industry considered necessary to sustain the kind of urban growth the industry wanted to see."

[73] Higgins, p. 142.

[74] For a more detailed assessment see Thomas J. Plunkett, *Urban Canada and its Government* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968) pp. 92 -108.

[75] *Report of the Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto*, by Hon. John P. Robarts, Chairman, vol. 1 (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1977), p. v.

publications, received 227 submissions, and scheduled 27 public hearings.[76] In June of 1977 its recommendations were released. The commission called for the continuation of the two-tier form of local government in metropolitan Toronto, the retention of the six area municipalities (subject to several minor boundary revisions), and a general review of the metropolitan system in not less than five nor more than ten years.[77] Radical change to the structure of local government in the area would appear unlikely in the near future, although there is some continuing discontent on the part of the city of Toronto concerning representation on the metropolitan council.[78] Nevertheless, the evidence again confirms not only that the province has played the decisive role in the governmental reform of its largest urban area, but also maintains a consistent game-plan or strategy: 'reform if necessary, but not necessarily reform.'

The establishment of regional governments presents another significant aspect of this approach to municipal reorganization in Ontario. The first regional government was the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Municipality which came into being in January 1969. The province was convinced of the merits of consolidation after metro's own initial success and the subsequent publication of two government reports which indicated that any regional development strategy required co-ordination with the planning efforts of municipal governments.[79] In 1965, the Beckett Report (from the provincial legislature's Select Committee on the Municipal Act and Related Acts) recommended the establishment of larger regional units. The committee believed the boundaries of the regions should take into account population, assessment, planning areas, watersheds, and economic and social conditions. Two years later, the Ontario Committee on Taxation (the Smith Report) recommended a major reform of the local government structure incorporating a regional system. During this period, statements by Premier

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[76] *Report of the Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto*, by Hon. John P. Robarts, Chairman, vol. 2 (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1977), pp. 384-395.
[77] *Report of the Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto*, vol. 1, pp. 42-62.
[78] *Vancouver Sun*, 14 August 1980. Mayor John Sewell argues that according to the maxim 'no taxation without representation' Toronto is already under represented. "We pay 40 per cent of all the bucks to Metro but have only slightly more than one quarter of the votes."
[79] Higgins, p. 144.

Robarts indicated that the province again intended to become involved in municipal reorganization:

> It is the responsibility of the Ontario government to assess the present and future requirements of the province relating to social, economic, and *governmental* development.[80]

Probably the single most important statute historically affecting local government in Ontario has been the Municipal Corporations Act of 1849, commonly known as the Baldwin Act. The act was the culmination of a long struggle for local autonomy and its provisions still form the basis of many of the municipal institutions of the province.[81] Under the provisions of the act, the township became the basic unit of local government. The townships, towns (except for separated towns), and villages became the lower tier of Baldwin's two-tiered system. The county, which formerly was an electoral district rather than a local government unit, replaced the district and became the upper of the two tiers. County council consisted of the reeves and deputy reeves from each of the constituent municipalities of the county.

Regional government is a two-tier structure which has been described as a modification of the traditional county system in Ontario.[82] Today, the upper tier of the regional government generally assumes responsibility for area-wide planning and regional services (water, sewage, transportation networks) while the lower tier units look after the remaining matters of a more local concern. Each of Ontario's twelve two-tier regional municipalities was established under its own act following the recommendations of an investigating commission making it difficult to generalize much more about their organization.[83] It has been noted, however, that regional municipalities have been established almost totally on provincial government initiative[84] and despite sporadic municipal opposition.

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[80] *Design for Development*, (Toronto: Queen's Printer, April, 1966), p. 6. (emphasis added)
[81] Crawford, p. 32.
[82] Tindal and Tindal, p. 60.
[83] David Siegal, "Provincial-Municipal Relations: An Overview," *Canadian Public Administration* 23 (Summer, 1980) p. 285.
[84] County of Strathcona, *Evaluation of Alternative Structures & a Proposal for Local Governance in the Edmonton Region*, (Edmonton, 1980), p. 44.

Not all of the regional municipalities are content with the two-tier system advanced by the provincial government. In the Hamilton-Wentworth Region, for example, the dominant urban center of Hamilton (with 75 per cent of the region's population) has recently sought, through a motion of its city council, to opt out of the regional setup.[85] The city has made several attempts to persuade the provincial government to amalgamate the six municipalities that comprise the region but to date has been unsuccessful. Regional decisions are stymied because of quorum requirements. In 1977 the province established a review commission, under Henry Stewart, to examine the organization, administration, and functioning of local government within the regional municipality. The commission identified three major problems:

> "there are serious conflicts between city and non-city politicians, which interfere with and retard the development of policies to serve the citizens of the Region; the structure blurs accountability and hinders accessibility, with the result that it cannot respond to the citizens easily; and, finally, the structure of the system results in resources not being used as efficiently as possible."[86]

In its surprising and somewhat controversial report, the commission recommended that:

> "The lower-tier municipalities of Hamilton-Wentworth be abolished and a single tier local government structure composed of one municipal council be established in the present Region of Hamilton-Wentworth."[87]

The commission's recommendations were ignored due to strong pressure placed on the minority provincial government from municipalities surrounding Hamilton.[88] Recent statements by the provincial government now indicate a renewed commitment to a two-tier system of regional government for the province, a commitment rooted in the Baldwin Act of 1849 and the creation of metropolitan Toronto in 1953.[89] Even this, however, represented a strong provincial interest in, and commitment to, a consistent and actively interventionist strategy.

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[85] *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 11 September 1980.
[86] *Report of the Hamilton-Wentworth Review Commission*, by Henry E. Stewart, Chairman (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1978), pp. 40-41.
[87] *Ibid.*, p. 49.
[88] This point, which lends further support to Smallwood's calculus, was most recently acknowledged during Edmonton's 1981 annexation bid. See: City of Edmonton, *Written Argument* (Edmonton, 1981) p. 106.
[89] *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 11 September 1980.

D. Winnipeg

An examination of Winnipeg's history of reform offers the student of metropolitan reorganization an excellent case study of the evolution of a fragmented urban area into one with a comprehensive unitary structure.

The post world war expansion that took place in Canada brought to Winnipeg the host of 'problems' that affected metropolitan areas in general during the 1950s. Nineteen separate municipalities in various stages of development comprised the region. Inter-municipal agreements had been in operation for many years, (for example, as early as 1913 a special purpose agency had been set up to provide an adequate supply of water for the whole urbanized area).[90] Difficulties in coordinating and financing local services however, led the Manitoba Urban Association and the Union of Manitoba Municipalities, in 1950, to request the provincial Liberal-Progressive government of D.L. Campbell to conduct a major study of Winnipeg's problems. The Joint Provincial-Municipal Relations Committee was the first of many bodies that would study local government in Winnipeg.

Following the North American pattern, the central city advocated amalgamation; the familiar claims of fiscal inequities, the inability to enforce comprehensive plans, and fragmented decision-making authority were cited as reasons for comprehensive reform.[91] In 1953 the Joint Committee's Sub-Committee on Local Government in Winnipeg recommended that a single metropolitan board replace all the existing special purpose bodies. When a consensus on these proposals appeared unlikely the Campbell government decided to undertake another study.

In 1955 Leslie Bodie was appointed chairman of the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission. This report, released in 1959, prompted the creation of Metropolitan Winnipeg in 1961 by Progressive Conservative Premier Roblin.[92] Although the commission recommended some substantial modifications to the

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[90] S.G. Rich, "Metropolitan Winnipeg: The First Ten Years," in *Urban Problems: A Canadian Reader*, ed. R.R. Krueger & R.C. Bryfogle (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971), p. 359.

[91] Ibid., p. 362.

[92] See Plunkett, *Urban Canada and its Government*, pp. 104 - 108.

status quo along the lines of the Toronto experience (a reduction in the number of municipalities and functional shifts to Metro), by the time that these proposals worked their way through the political process a minimal area-wide package emerged.[93]

The nature of the compromise left most of the affected parties unhappy.[94] The City of Winnipeg continued to argue in favour of complete amalgamation; surrounding municipalities felt that they had forfeited too many powers to Metro; and the provincial government failed to provide significant transitional grants, forcing Metro to introduce a substantial levy on property. As one student of Metropolitan Winnipeg writes, "the provincial government saw its creation disliked by the public, hated by the mayor of Winnipeg, and opposed by the municipalities."[95]

Although the original act had called for an examination of the new government after five years, these pressures resulted in a review of Metro in 1962. The province appointed Lorne Cumming (the author of the report recommending Metro Toronto) to head the Greater Winnipeg Review Commission. His vindication of Metropolitan Winnipeg in 1964 should not have surprised anyone. The commission, however, failed to address the major complaints of the member municipalities and instead recommended an alteration to the boundaries of Metro as well as a reduction in its planning powers through the introduction of an appeal process through the Manitoba Muncipal Board.[96]

These minor changes to the structure of Metro were adopted in 1964, but did not silence the critics. In 1966 the Conservative government ordered

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[93] Toronto's metropolitan government was studied by a number of review bodies from other provinces charged with recommending a structure of local government. See for example Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission, *Report and Recommendations*(Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, 1959) p. 276; *Report of the Royal Commission on the Metropolitan Development of Calgary and Edmonton* (Edmonton: Queen's Printer, 1956), chapter 13, pp. 5-7. This report is commonly referred to by the surname of the chairman of the commission, G.F. McNally, and will be so cited here.

[94] The final outcome was much less radical than the reforms of Metro Toronto. See: James Lightbody, "The Reform of a Metropolitan Government: The Case of Winnipeg, 1971," p. 493.

[95] Tom Axworthy, "Winnipeg Unicity," *A Look to the North*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974), p. 94.

[96] Rich, pp. 362-363.

yet another study. The Local Government Boundaries Commission reported in 1970. The Commision, predominantly comprised of representatives of rural municipalities (and chaired by the defeated Minister of Municipal Affairs), recommended an incrementally modified Metro scheme.[97] In the interim the conflicts between the City of Winnipeg and metro heightened[98] and, of even greater significance, the New Democratic Party defeated the Conservative government in 1969. The NDP campaign included a commitment to review local government; the Boundaries Commission Report was never seriously considered. Instead, the new government drew up plans for the creation of a single-tier government for metropolitan Winnipeg.

The adoption of Bill 36 which created Unicity Winnipeg marked a new approach to governing the metropolitan area. The new City of Winnipeg was to replace the former municipal governments and metropolitan council which had exercised jurisdiction in greater Winnipeg. Associated with this comprehensive reform was an emphasis on citizen access and participation. The new city was divided into 50 single member wards with groups of between three and six of these constituting a community committee. These committees were to approximate, as closely as possible, the territory of the former municipalities and to serve as a forum for citizen involvement and a vehicle for political decentralization of certain functions.

These innovative proposals were by no means universally acclaimed. The affected municipalities were fighting for their very existence. The role that the province played in the reform of metropolitan Winnipeg cannot be underestimated. Despite Smallwood's formula its actions clearly demonstrate that ambitious reforms are possible with a determined government. The pressure groups that typically become active in opposing local government reorganizations were evident in Winnipeg.[99] The actions of the NDP government, however,

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[97] James Lightbody, "The Reform of a Metropolitan Government: The Case of Winnipeg, 1971," p. 496.
[98] David Walker, *The Great Winnipeg Dream*, (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1979), pp. 17-20.
[99] James Lightbody, "The Actors in Metropolitan Reform: The Winnipeg Experience" (Occasional Paper 7, University of Alberta, 1979), p. 8.

proved to be the important variable. As one student of local government points out,

> The crucial differences in the Winnipeg case were the New Democrats' ideological commitment to unification, their political differentiation from their suburban opponents, and, ultimately, their unwillingness to act as a broker among formal expressions of interest but rather as a creative policy initiator.[100]

In its original proposals the NDP also created a provincial Urban Affairs Department (in essence a Ministry of Winnipeg) which further indicated their intent to have an active, on-going interest in metropolitan development in the province.[101]

The theory behind the organization of Unicity did not transform itself into practise. The fifty members of the new council, elected in single member wards, tended to be parochial in their outlook; policy-making suffered at the expense of a preoccupation with administrative details.[102] And, while the new arrangement proved successful in reducing the disparities in service levels which previously existed among the independent jurisdictions, the expectations placed on improved citizen participation failed to materialize.[103]

The Unicity Act (section 660) called for a review of its creation within five years; the Manitoba government moved two years earlier than required and appointed Judge Peter Taraska as Chairman of a Committee of Review in September, 1975. This report was released in October, 1976, and contained 71 recommendations, several of which were unique within the context of local government in Canada. The committee, for example, argued,

> the City of Winnipeg Act, in its present form, is incomplete and cannot fulfill the intent of those concepts."(outlined in the original Act) "Nor can they be realized any more effectively through simple amendments to procedures or superficial changes in the city's administrative organization. We are convinced that the Act, although it has carried the municipal government of Winnipeg a very great distance toward the realization of those concepts, still leaves one last critical step - perhaps it is only half a step - to be taken. That measure in the establishment of a parliamentary system of government for the city.[104]

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[100] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[101] Axworthy, p. 98.
[102] Tindal and Tindal, p. 64.
[103] Higgins, pp. 203-206.
[104] *Report and Recommendations: Committee of Review of Winnipeg Act*, Peter Taraska, Chairman (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, 1976), p. 142.

This ambitious proposal was not acted upon (the NDP lost the election of 1977) although several others were well received and subsequently implemented. During the course of the hearings, not a single submission recommended a return to the former two-tiered structure, or, for that matter, a return to the pre-Metro situation of multiple autonomous municipalities.[105] This observation suggests that even unpopular, bold, provincial initiatives may gain acceptance over time. But it is not a lesson easily absorbed by provincial governments faced with the entrenched applecarts of the *status quo*. In June, 1977, the size of council was reduced from fifty to twenty-nine, the number of community committees decreased from twelve to six, and the mayor was removed from the board of commissioners and was replaced on the executive policy committee by a council-elected chairman, all by direct provincial action.[106] Despite some grumblings that persist today over the introduction of a uniform tax rate and the 'snail like' pace of the zoning approval process,[107] the Unicity concept is firmly entrenched as provincial policy for Manitoba's capital city. So, once again, the Manitoba experience illustrates the crucial role that provincial administrations must play in the determination of the structure of local government. More importantly, the history of reform efforts in Winnipeg shows that where a provincial government has the determination to proceed, and a strategy to pursue, it can and will.

E. Vancouver

Unlike the three examples mentioned above, the establishment of a metropolitan government for the Vancouver area did not originate from a crisis in the delivery of either hard or soft services. Rather, the major problems were found in poor land use and uncontrolled sprawl in both unorganized territory and some municipalities.[108] It has been suggested that the impetus to

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[105] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[106] Tindal and Tindal, p. 65.
[107] *Vancouver Sun*, 15 August 1980.
[108] David W. Barnes, "The System of Regional Districts in British Columbia," *A Look to the North*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974), p. 110.

reform arose not from the municipalities themselves but from within the provincial Department of Municipal Affairs.[109] Prior to 1965, when provision was made to divide the province into regional districts, over 99 per cent of the province's territory was without some semblance of local government. Nonetheles, in addition to municipalities, the greater Vancouver area had in place six special-purpose regional authorities dating from as far back as 1914.[110]

In 1964, the Department of Municipal Affairs, under the direction of the Minister, Dan Campbell, pursued its goal of functional amalgamation or regionalization in the urban area in a manner that has been described as 'gentle imposition'. The evolution of metropolitan government in the Vancouver area was indeed subtle. It wasn't until 1967 that the minister issued letters patent which provided that the regional district would exist.[111] The use of the term, Regional District of Fraser-Burrard, and the attachment of the organization to the existing single-purpose Hospital Board provided a rather inconspicuous beginning to the district.

Greater Vancouver was to be governed by a very loose federation of eighteen municipalities and electoral areas which combined to run a small but growing list of services. The Greater Vancouver Regional District was recognized in 1968 and 1969 as the proper repository for the functions performed by existing single-purpose authorities and for any new regional functions which might emerge.[112] Over the years, as a result of the favourable view that member municipalities held of the organization, the regional district has acquired an increasing list of responsibilities. They include debt management, public housing, air pollution control, building regulations, labour relations, and, for the unincorporated areas, community planning and other municipal services. The most recent addition has been responsibility for transit and the regional district is moving toward its own emergency coordinating service and a regional economic

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[109] Paul Tennant and David Zirnhelt, "Metropolitan Government in Vancouver: The Strategy of Gentle Imposition," *A Look to the North*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974), p. 128.
[110] Higgins, p. 155.
[111] Tennant and Zirnhelt, pp. 130-131.
[112] *Ibid.*, p.131.

body to steer industry to the best locations.[113] The provincial strategy of 'gentle imposition' appears to have succeeded in bringing about a form of metropolitan government in the Vancouver region without a public recognition that it was such.[114] Even today, however, the approach used by the principal actors in the district, and the province, indicates a hesitation to admit the existence of a second tier of government. Nevertheless, even with this deception, a conscious and interventionalist provincial strategy is in evidence.

Developers describe the present arrangement as "a bastard situation" where "we have a thing called the Greater Vancouver regional district where directors are municipal politicians who lobby for the confirmation of decisions by their councils."[115] A degree of fragmentation has been experienced. Studies conducted prior to the GVRD assuming responsibility for transit indicated that the structure of the Regional District led to an inability of Vancouver and surrounding municipalities to overcome their parochial interests. This led to a lengthy period of inaction.[116] The Department of Municipal Affairs, while maintaining that the regional district is not a metropolitan government, has promised (at least in the press) to facilitate the planning process by streamlining and centralizing zoning approval.[117] This situation, coupled with the statements of the present chairman of the GVRD that "we move slowly" (with respect to assuming a more powerful role) tends to suggest that the provincial strategy of 'gentle imposition' is alive and well, and that it has received a high level of support from municipal politicians. The GVRD is certainly not as radical as some of the other structures identified in this chapter. By opting for the "road of least resistance" the Province of British Columbia has created a politically acceptable vehicle for managing basic regional concerns in the Vancouver area. But clearly, the province did have a strategy, and it has acted in a consistent policy direction since the mid-1960s to accomplish a measure of rationality and

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[113] *Vancouver Sun*, 13 August 1980.
[114] Tennant and Zirnhelt, p. 134.
[115] *Vancouver Sun*, 18 August 1980.
[116] Lionel D. Feldman and Katherine A. Graham, *Bargaining for Cities* (Toronto: Butterworth and Co., 1979), pp. 64-65.
[117] *Vancouver Sun*, 13 August 1980.

efficiency for for its largest metropolitan area.

F. Summation

The experiences of these four large metropolitan areas and regional government in Ontario illustrate both the changes in local government structures which have taken place within the last three decades as well as the crucial importance in Canada of the provincial governments in shaping the reorganization of their respective metropolitan areas no matter how trifling the changes may be. As this chapter illustrates, the provincial governments of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia have been instrumental in the reorganization and modernization of the structure of local government in their major urban centers. The impetus may have been either a hard or soft service crisis, or ideological, but metropolitan reorganization has consistently proven to be one of those issue arenas in which provincial governments *must* define a policy stance. An examination of metropolitan Edmonton will reveal a departure from this Canadian 'track record' of intervention. Of the eight census metropolitan areas identified by Statistics Canada with a population over 500,000 in 1976, only the greater metropolitan area of Edmonton has yet to undergo a major reorganization of boundaries toward a measure of greater governmental integration.

This lack of provincial initiative is not meant to suggest that the issue of reorganization is non-existent. Edmonton, the dominant municipality in the urban area, has attempted for over two decades to receive provincial approval for a consolidation of the metropolitan area into a single-tier government. The province has not only consistently deferred the city's requests but also refused to articulate a policy regarding any alternative governmental structure for the Edmonton area until 1981. In light of comparative experience, and the apparent imperative for other provincial administrations to define a policy stance no matter how circumspect, the question becomes: what has been the Alberta strategy on the question of metropolitan reform. In the next chapter we will narrow the discussion to the Edmonton area and examine the history of attempted reform in the region during the years that the Social Credit party

formed the government in Alberta. The role of successive provincial administrations in determining the structure and form of local government in the metropolitan area as well as the possible reasons for the apparent lack of comprehensive provincial initiatives will be explored.

III. The Social Credit Years

A. Introduction

In the previous two chapters we have established not only that the several common problems of burgeoning metropolitan areas have begotten a variety of academic and governmental responses but also that, under the constitution in Canada, it is the provinces which possess the ultimate authority to determine the structure and function of local government. It has also been shown that several provinces with large metropolitan areas have taken steps over the post-war years to implement forms of local government which better reflect the changing fiscal and spatial nature of their cities in accordance with their partisan and ideological dictates. In the next two chapters we will focus our attention on Alberta administrations in an attempt to determine why the Edmonton metropolitan area has not undergone such a directed reorganization as has occured in other Canadian centres.

Alberta provincial politics have been characterized by massive one party dominance. On only three occasions since its entry into confederation has the electorate voted out the party in office and the government of the day has usually enjoyed an overwhelming majority. With such secure mandates one could assume that a party in power could safely pursue controversial policies and goals (within reason) without fear of voter recrimination if it so chose. This has not been the case in metropolitan affairs. Despite the constitutional authority and the political means to develop a comprehensive policy on the governing of the Edmonton metropolitan region, a noticeable absence of intervention continued.

This is not to suggest that structural options have not been placed before these provincial governments. Since 1956 various reports have recommended the unification of the metropolitan area. Not surprisingly, the City of Edmonton has responded favourably to these suggestions and has pursued the goals of expanding its boundaries to incorporate adjacent urban areas and acquiring a dominant voice in the determination of regional land use. Without exception the provincially sponsored studies since 1956 have recommended a

single tier form of government for the region.

No attempt will be made to judge the merits of arguments posited in favour of or in opposition to a unitary form of government. Rather, we will turn our attention to explaining why governments have not heeded the advice of their own agencies, particularly when forewarned that failure to resolve the issue would lead to future problems.

In 1947 the discovery of oil in the Leduc area, 17 miles south of Edmonton, guaranteed strong industrial and population growth for the forseeable future. Quite naturally, the metropolitan area of the capital city region was significantly affected. Prior to 1947 both the city and the province had experienced cyclical booms and busts and the need for territorial expansion of the City of Edmonton was never pressing. If anything, the city was under-bounded.[118] Leduc and the development of the petrochemical industry changed that.

As this chapter will attempt to explain the lack of provincial initiative in bringing about a governmental or spatial reorganization of the Edmonton area, a few words about the Social Credit movement and subsequent governments will be useful.

In 1935 William Aberhart and the Social Credit League swept to power, obliterating the incumbent government of the United Farmers of Alberta. The time was ripe for a change; the electorate was frustrated and there was no end in sight to the Great Depression. Aberhart, the charismatic teacher, high school principal, and lay fundamentalist preacher espoused the theory of social credit and completely won over the voters with his solution to the tough economic times.[119] Aberhart and his followers' answer to the apparent inconsistency of "poverty in the midst of plenty" rested in the belief that a reform of the financial system through the implementation of the social credit

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[118] P.J. Smith and H.L. Diemer, "Equity and the Annexation Process: Edmonton's Bid for the Strathcona Industrial Corridor," in *Edmonton: The Emerging Metropolitan Pattern*, ed. P.J. Smith (Victoria: University of Victoria, 1978), p. 268.

[119] Carlo Caldarola, "The Social Credit in Alberta, 1935 - 1971," in *Society and Politics in Alberta*, ed. C. Caldarola (Toronto: Methuen, 1979), pp. 39-41.

theory would restore prosperity to Albertans.[120] Although prosperity was eventually restored to Albertans, it was through the exploitation of natural resources and not the theories of Major Douglas. Aberhart's efforts to reform the existing financial system were consistently overturned by the courts.

In 1943 Aberhart died and his long time associate and confidante, Ernest Manning, was chosen by the Social Credit caucus to lead the party. The new premier, only thirty-four, quickly established a reputation for honest, efficient, free-enterprise government. Monetary reform faded into the background, helped by windfall resource profits.[121]

Manning consolidated his party's electoral support in 1944 when he went to the polls one year earlier than expected. With 52 percent of the popular vote he captured 51 of a possible 57 seats. The Socreds inherited the support which previously was given to the UFA, and although the average vote for the party in the north was generally six percent or more below the average figure in the southern ridings, their initial margins were almost always sufficient to guarantee strong majorities in the next seven elections. Social Credit was nearly invincible in the rural southern heartland of the province. In their initial sweep to power in 1935 only one MLA from a rural constituency did not belong to the League. Until their fall in 1971, opposition candidates in the south were successful in only 16 out of 272 contests. The urban vote for Social Credit typically lagged behind the average in the rural areas by 10-14 percent and it was the urban areas of the province that first abandoned Social Credit in favour of the Progressive Conservatives, who would eventually form the government.[122] The constituencies of successive ministers of municipal affairs reflected this rural bias. Only two of the eight men who held the position represented a city in the province and their combined tenure accounted for only three years of the Socreds' 36 years in power.[123]

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[120] John A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 6-9, 334-336.
[121] John J. Barr, *The Dynasty* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), pp. 120-131.
[122] Thomas Flanagan, "Stability and Change in Alberta Provincial Elections," *Alberta Historical Review*, 21 (1973), pp. 6-7.
[123] This pattern was not unusual for the prairie provinces, however, where the

In the following pages we will analyse the response of this wealthy, rural based party to initiatives for governmental change in the Edmonton metropolitan area.

B. The McNally Royal Commission and the Provincial Response

By 1954 the development of the oil and gas industry had resulted in noticeable strains on the province's two largest urban areas. Edmonton at that time comprised an area of 43.91 square miles and had at its north-east and western borders the two lower income towns of Beverly and Jasper Place respectively. The MD of Strathcona formed the city's eastern and southern boundary; its proposed Campbelltown site with a projected population of 30,000 further threatened to fragment the metropolitan area. Edmonton's remaining borders joined the District of Stony Plain and the MDs of Morinville and Sturgeon.

In an attempt to cope with this rapid post war urbanization the Social Credit government passed legislation in 1950 enabling the Lieutenant Governor in Council to establish district planning commissions, and in so doing determine area, municipal membership, and fees. The act ensured provincial involvement through a provision calling for up to three representatives of the province, but municipal membership was not mandatory and the powers of the commissions were strictly advisory. The Edmonton District Planning Commission was severely limited in its potential to reduce conflicts in the region as its powers were all discretionary, not obligatory. The influx of both people and capital prompted by accelerated activity in the resource sector, and the resulting jurisdictional fragmentation of the metropolitan areas of Edmonton and Calgary, led the provincial government to establish a five man royal commission by order in council in July of that year. The Commission, headed by Dr. G. F. McNally, was instructed, among other matters, to:

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[123](cont'd)ministry of municipal affairs has been typically viewed as a service agency for rural and small town municipalities. At the same time, it did not sensitize the permanent bureaucracy to what was, essentially, a consequence of large-scale *urban* development.

> ... recommend the boundaries and the form of local government which will adequately and equitably provide for the orderly development of school and municipal services.[124]

In addition to Dr. McNally, former Deputy Minister of Education, the commissioners included G.M. Blackstock, former chairman of the Board of Public Utilities Commissioners, Percy G. Davies of Clyde, Ivan C. Robison of Calgary and Charles P. Hayes, of Strome, president of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts.

With the exception of Dr. H.B. Mayo, Professor of Political Science at the University of Alberta, and William McGrather, formerly of the Department of Municipal Affairs, who acted as secretary, the commission did not employ counsel or research staff. The commissioners noted in their report's foreward that they sought relevant information from "every source where it could be found," and that they were not confined to material given in evidence.[125]

The City of Edmonton's submission to the commission was based on five points:

1. the city favors the creation of a new Municipal Council, a new Public School Board and a new Separate School Board each to have authority over the whole of the metropolitan area and to replace all existing elected local government bodies in the area.
2. the city favors fairly wide limits for the boundaries of this area which would include all of Jasper Place, all of Beverly and sufficient area within the four surrounding municipal districts so that the limits would fall well beyond the industrial plants on the eastern outskirts and well beyond the present built-up areas in each direction.
3. the city feels that any restricted or piece meal approach would not provide adequate scope for future growth on a balanced basis and would be certain to lead to a repetition of the present difficulties in a short time.
4. the city would be forced to oppose any proposal to amalgamate Edmonton, Jasper Place and Beverly without the adjacent industrial area because such a proposal would involve a heavy burden of additional municipal taxes upon the residents of the city and would not provide for future growth.
5. the city requests that it be given the right to present a further brief at a later date in its elaboration of its proposals or in reply to proposals made by others.[126]

Reaction from the jurisdictions surrounding Edmonton ranged from indifference

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[124] *Report of the Royal Commission on the Metropoltian Development of Calgary and Edmonton* (Edmonton: Queen's Printer, 1956), p. iv.
[125] Ibid., p. vi.
[126] Contents of Presentation of October 12, 1954, in *Final Statement on behalf of The City of Edmonton to Royal Commission on Metropolitan Reorganization*, pp. 23-24.

to outright rejection. Neither the MD of Morinville, the MD of Sturgeon, nor the District of Stony Plain bothered to appear before the Commission; the Towns of Jasper Place and Beverly agreed in principle with amalgamation; and the MD of Strathcona was opposed from the outset to any proposal which would apportion any or all of its tax generating industrial land to Edmonton.

The preparation of the report was a mammoth undertaking. The commission held 33 formal meetings covering 112 days. In Edmonton alone 47 volumes of transcript (5975 pages) were recorded and 232 briefs were received. In January, 1956 the commission released its final report. With respect to the City of Edmonton, the Report established seven principles against which to measure local government:

1. It is unjust and inequitable that wide variations in the tax base should exist among the local governing bodies that comprise a metropolitan area where the area is in fact one economic and social unit.
2. A metropolitan area which is in fact one economic and social unit can ordinarily be more efficiently governed by one central municipal authority than by a multiplicity of local governing bodies.
3. When industrial growth has taken place immediately adjoining or in close proximity to the boundaries of the city the proper and best suited municipal unit to govern and control such growth is the city. Industries are "urban" and need an urban location.
4. Where industry has established itself to a substantial extent immediately adjoining the boundaries of the city and the workers in such industry and their families reside within the city, the taxes from such industry should be collected by the city which is called upon to furnish the educational and numerous municipal services arising from the residence of the workers.
5. The city is entitled to growing space, and to have this space it is necessary that its boundaries should expand into rural municipalities.
6. Where the area immediately adjoining the city has taken on strong urban characteristics it should be under aegis of the City Planning Department in preference to a rural municipal council.
7. It would constitute nothing short of a metropolitan tragedy to permit a second city to grow up on Edmonton's east boundary completely independant of, and duplicating, the existing city.[127]

Since 1956 these principles have been consistently referred to by those favouring an enlarged single tier form of government for the Edmonton metropolitan area.

Accordingly, the commission recommended that the Towns of Jasper Place and Beverly be amalgamated with the City of Edmonton, and that Edmonton's boundaries be enlarged on all sides, including annexation of the industrial area in Strathcona and the townsite of Campbelltown. Edmonton's total

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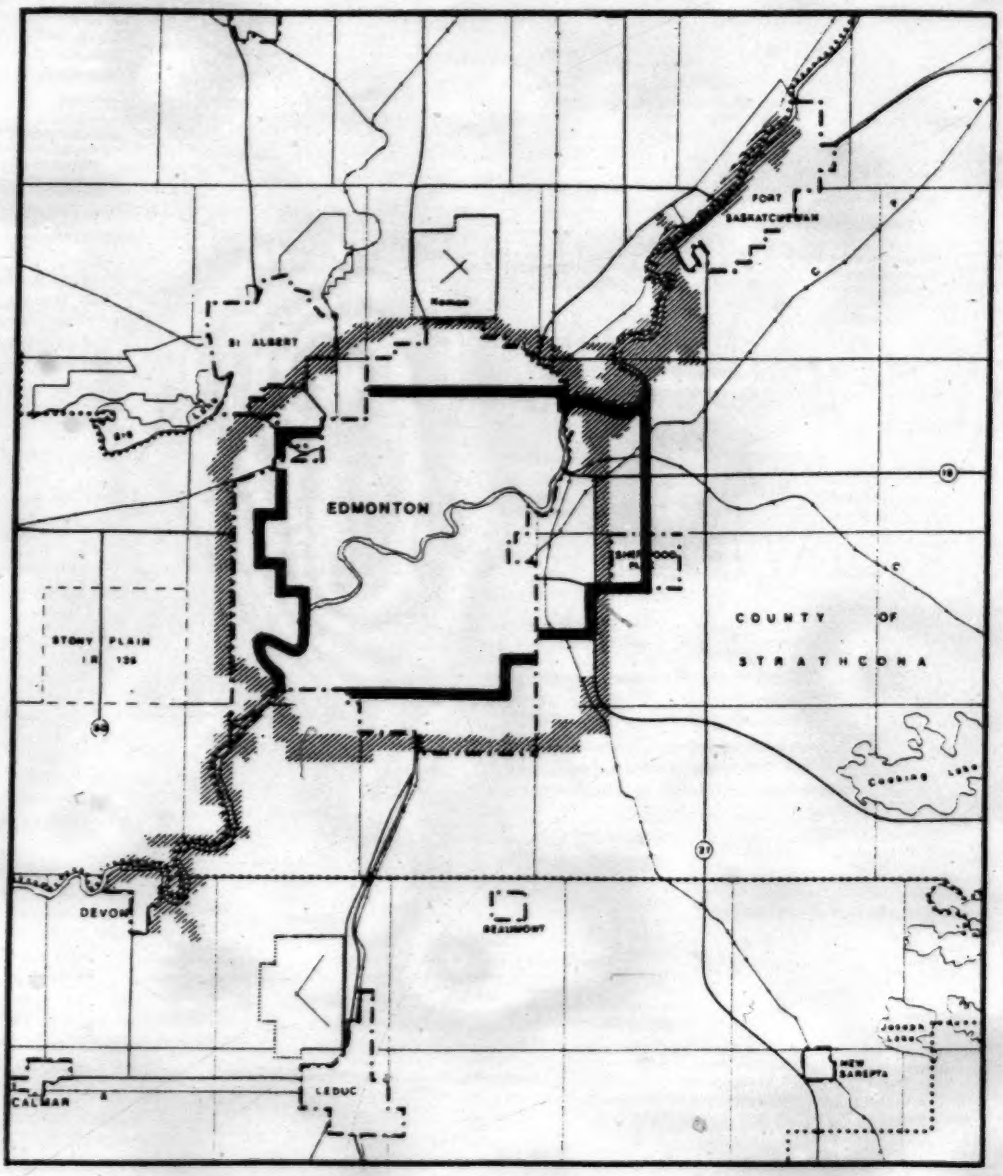
[127] McNally, chapter 12, pp. 5 - 35.

McNALLY COMMISSION - 1956

BOUNDARIES

Existing — · — · — Recommended ——— R.D.A ////////



size would be 112 square miles. The report was released to the Social Credit government for action.

Up until this time the approach to municipal affairs by Socred administrations had as its stated philosophical base the freedom of individuals and local authorities to make their way in life, and to be publicly supported only in the public interest or in the case of a clearly defined handicap.[128] A careful scrutiny of public funds and a commitment to financial stability characterized their years in power. Local autonomy was a laudable goal; the expense of this policy , however, was high:

> Within Alberta, it was largely the problems of city planning, regional planning, and the scarcity of development capital that preoccupied the attention of the provincial government. But it was precisely in these limited areas that the province was unwilling to take on the responsibility of leadership and the introduction of guiding policy for the province as a whole. *Laissez-faire*, equalized assessments, per capita grants and additional financial assistance in civic buildings, grants-in-lieu of taxes and other calculable contributions were the expression of Social Credit philosophy.[129]

McNally's recommendation of a provincially imposed Edmonton boundary appeared to depart from the prevailing thought of the period. Ironically, however, radical reorganization was nothing new to the Socreds.

Prior to 1936, for example, most school districts in the province were only four miles square and the costs of maintaining schools in such small areas proved increasingly difficult. In 1936 the province stepped in and passed legislation resulting in the amalgamation of fifty or sixty small school districts into one large school division at the order of the minister despite "almost universal condemnation."[130] Similar programs were put into effect regarding the consolidation of municipal districts. The reasoning behind the move was similar to that which led to the reorganization of school districts. Between 1928 and 1940, twenty seven small municipal districts became "disorganized" and their administration was taken over by the Department of Municipal Affairs. Arguments of efficiency, economies of scale, and stable and equitable mill rates carried the

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[128] D.G. Bettison, J.K. Kenward, and L. Taylor, *Urban Affairs in Alberta*, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1975), p. 123.
[129] Ibid. p. 143.
[130] A.J. Hooke, *30 + 5 I Know, I Was There*, (Edmonton: Co-op Press, 1971), p. 130.

day.[131] In the short period of two years between 1942 and 1944 the number of municipal districts in Alberta had been reduced from 143 to 60.

As radical as these consolidations appeared, they were dwarfed in significance by the passage of the County Act in 1950. Ignoring widespread opposition the province moved ahead with its plans to combine the newly structured school and municipal districts into one omnibus unit of local government. While heralded by some as the final logical step in the evolution of local government in Alberta, not everyone shared this enthusiasm:

> It was opposed as "an attempt by the Department of Municipal Affairs to take over the running of school districts," as a plan "to centralize and regiment the entire province in Counties" or more tersely as "dictatorial centralization".
>
> Opposition to the system was unaccountably strong in the teaching profession and among school trustees (who saw in it "the deterioration of school affairs in favor of roads, sidewalks and other public services"). Individuals were certain that counties would mean increased taxes, the loss of personal contact with their local councils, decreasing importance of elected officials, reduced services and even their own disfranchisement.[132]

Nevertheless, the province persevered and today the county system is a permanent feature of local government in Alberta. As recently as May, 1981, the Minister of Municipal Affairs told the legislature that "the government is concerned that the principle of the county system in Alberta be maintained, and that means joint administration and joint decision making on educational and municipal matters..."[133] The boldness of the Social Credit reforms was recognized and praised in the McNally report. The Commissioners noted:

> The Alberta county system breaks sharply and boldly with tradition...Its object was to eliminate a multiplicity of local elected bodies, and place the functions of local government squarely upon one elected council, responsible for both taxation and expenditures. The history of local government administration in Alberta is marked by far-reaching reforms initiated by the province as in the reorganization and enlargement of school divisions, and municipal districts, the replacement of separate city charters by the City Act, and the County system. It is, of course, only proper that this should be so, *since under the constitution the province is ultimately responsible for all municipal government.*[134]

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[131] E.J. Hanson, "Local Government Reorganization in Alberta," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*. 16 (February, 1950), p. 57.
[132] Department of Municipal Affairs, *After 10 Years: The Alberta County System*,(1961), pp. 5-6.
[133] Legislative Assembly of Alberta, *Hansard* 19th Legislature 3rd Session (29 May 1981), p. 1027.
[134] McNally, Chapter 13, p.3. Emphasis added.

A further example of the Socred's determination to reform local governments was the formation, in 1953, of the Co-Terminous Boundaries Commission. Accepting a recommendation from the Royal Commission on Provincial Municipal Relations in Alberta (conducted in 1947), the government struck a five man committee to determine co-terminous boundaries for municipal districts and school divisions. An important consideration in the committee's recommendations was the financial capacity of the jurisdiction. In order to bring about a more equitable tax burden the commission tried to combine low assessment areas with high assessment areas and the provincial government often agreed, despite strong resistance from wealthier jurisdictions.[135]

The boldness of the Social Credit government in reorganizing local government in the rural areas did not extend itself to urban areas. While neither McNally nor the provincial government was inclined to depart from the single tier tradition of local government by implementing a second tier or regional level for the Edmonton area, the province was not convinced that it should accept the changes outlined in the Royal Commission. The Socreds chose to remain consistent with their stated philosophy of local autonomy. Their failure to respond quickly to the recommendations of the McNally report and to offer direction for future urban development and growth left the whole issue open. While told that "to decide upon it...would eliminate many uncertainties,"[136] the government's decision not to make a decision left the issue unresolved.

The rationale for not proceeding with the recommendations of the McNally Report stemmed from the provincial government's concern with local taxation.[137] Their analysis of the ramifications of approving territorial expansion as envisaged by the Royal Commission showed that Strathcona's mill rate would skyrocket while the City of Edmonton would show only marginal taxation gains.[138]

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[135] Eric Hanson, *Local Government in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1956), pp. 70 -75.
[136] *Edmonton Journal*, Editorial, February 18, 1956.
[137] *Edmonton Journal*, October 22, 1959.
[138] Interviews with A.J. Hooke, Minister of Municipal Affairs 1956-1966, August 27, 1980 and June 22, 1981.

Rather than accept the recommendation advanced by McNally to overcome planning and fiscal problems in the metropolitan area, namely expanding Edmonton's boundaries, the Socreds opted instead to approach the two areas separately. In an attempt to address the issue of planning, the government chose to strengthen the Edmonton District Planning Commission with the passage of amendments to the Town and Rural Planning Act in 1957. The McNally Commission had noted the weakness of the then existing structure for joint planning and chided the government for its preoccupation with local independence:

> In Alberta, the voluntary principle is carried so far as to apply even to membership in the District Planning Commissions. But where a municipal member can withdraw at will from the Commission, and where a council can choose at any time to alter its zoning regulations as it thinks fit, obviously there can be no possible guarantee that a district plan will be either adopted or carried through. At the most it can remain a recommendation, which some councils may follow and others may not.[139]

The commissioners made particular reference to two occasions when the MD of Sturgeon in 1951 and the MD of Strathcona in 1954 withdrew from the EDPC in order to pursue their own interests and no longer be bound by the commission's rulings.[140] With the amendments of 1957, newly constituted regional planning commissions were required to prepare and adopt a general plan. That the draft regional plan of the Edmonton Regional Planning Commission was not released until 1978, however, suggests that the Socreds' answer to metropolitan planning did not lead to a quick resolution of the issue.

Without an explicit provincial policy dealing with the growth of the city, the problem of managing urban development outside Edmonton's formal boundaries remained unanswered. Between 1956 and 1960 four separate annexations took place, usually at the request of property owners.[141] Proposals for boundary adjustments in Alberta are handled by quasi-judicial boards. The

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[139] McNally, chapter 5, pp. 45-46.

[140] The Act read "no business relating to any matter of special concern to a particular municipality shall be transacted at any meeting which is not attended by at least one representative of that municipality. "R.S.A., 1950, c. 71, s. 11, c. (2).

[141] The annexations of Goldbar, Ottewell, Davies Industrial, and lands to the southwest added 8590 acres to Edmonton.

present day Local Authorities Board was created in 1961 and superceded the Public Utilities Board (1960-1961) and the Board of Public Utilities Commissioners (1915-1960) as the vehicle through which, among other matters, annexations and amalgamations are decided. Hearings can be commenced at the request of either a municipality or adjacent landowners.[142]

In an attempt to respond to these individual requests for annexation, the city established an Amalgamation Committee in 1957 and instructed it to draw up a city policy with respect to boundaries. In 1958 the council agreed with the committee's recommendations that it annex the territory outlined in the McNally Commission. Before hearings on the matter could be concluded the provincial cabinet intervened and requested the city to adjourn their application until the conclusion of the next legislative session. Premier Manning indicated that legislation could be passed that would affect the city's position.[143]

The provincial government had in mind a scheme whereby industrial taxation would be collected by the province and distributed based upon an agreed formula.[144] It was thought that this would reduce municipal competition for industry as well as relieve the necessity for annexations. The McNally Commission had recommended that a full inquiry be directed into assessment of industrial plants and the legislature established a special committee of senior government officials on April 17, 1956 to examine the issue. Its report was sent to executive council on November, 1958. The committee suggested a formula for the distribution of revenue collected, but representations made to the legislature's Agriculture Committee, notably from industrialists, forced the government to back down. This novel approach to the allocation of industrial taxation foundered on the question of distribution.[145] The policy vacuum persisted.

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[142] For a discussion of the Local Authorities Board and its role in annexation proceedings see, T.J. Plunkett and James Lightbody, "Tribunals, Politics and the Public Interest: The Edmonton Annexation Case," *Canadian Public Policy*, viii, 2 (Spring, 1982), pp. 207-221.

[143] Bettison et al, p. 262.

[144] *Edmonton Journal*, October 26, 1959.

[145] Interview with A.J. Hooke, 22 June, 1981. See A.J. Hooke, *Address to the Legislature*, February 24, 1961.

Nearly five years after the government began study of industrial assessment it proposed a measure much weaker than its original plan which would leave industrial assessment on municipal tax rolls but provide for a portion of municipal taxation to be paid into a special fund of the Department of Education. A measure of equity was achieved with the introduction of the School Foundation Program Fund, but the proposal was far removed from its predessor. Nevertheless the Minister of Municipal Affairs opined that passage of the measure would remedy the fiscal inequity noted by McNally.

> This brings us to the question of amalgamation. Up to this time, the City of Edmonton has wanted to amalgamate with Jasper Place and Beverly and to annex parts of rural areas in the municipalities of Strathcona, Stony Plain and Sturgeon River surrounding the City. The thought was that amalgamation was feasible only if Edmonton acquired the heavily industrialized area of Strathcona, in order to obtain the tax revenues therefrom...
>
> The McNally Commission had recommended that amalgamation be proceeded with and, further, that the Provincial Government pay a portion of the costs of raising the Edmonton and Calgary suburban areas to city standards. A careful study of these recommendations showed that the people throughout Alberta would be called upon to pay a minimum of $7,000,000 to bring about these results.
>
> Study also revealed that the enlarged areas would not actually benefit dollar wise, considering the new obligations the enlarged cities would have to carry out. At the same time, the rural municipalities affected by annexation would lose valuable assessment and tax revenue but because the area was small and assessment therein was high, they would still retain much of their present responsibilities...
>
> The dollar sign has now, under the new program, been removed completely from the amalgamation issue...The way is now paved for amalgamation to be discussed on the only basis on which it should be discussed: namely, the best sized unit for the most efficient administration.[146]

Suggestions for a single tier government for the metropolitan Edmonton area did not abate. In May, 1960, H. Carl Goldenberg (a principal consultant for the province in its formulation of the School Foundation Program Fund who went on to head a Royal Commission on Metro Toronto) addressed the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce during one of his visits to Edmonton to advise the government. In his speech entitled "Facing the Facts of Metropolitan Development", he stated,

> It appears to me that, apart from the industrial area of Strathcona, the suburban municipalities of both your large cities are dormitory communities into which the cities have spilled over. These municipalities are not comparable to the substantial satellite towns in

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[146] A.J. Hooke, *Address to the Legislature*, February 24, 1961.

> the Toronto or Montreal areas, each with its own special character and traditions. If these impressions are correct, it is my opinion that the proper approach to such centralization as the metropolitan areas of Edmonton and Calgary require is by way of amalgamation. And if amalgamation is now necessary, experience shows that the longer it is delayed, the higher the eventual costs will be.[147]

The province was unmoved. A modified regional planning commission and a modest redistribution of industrial taxation were seen as sufficient responses to the royal commission.

C. Edmonton's Initiatives

With no provincial direction and the McNally recommendations put on hold, the city reverted to a practise of responding to *ad hoc* annexation applications. In 1961 the Town of Beverly requested annexation to the City of Edmonton. While originally hesitant to pursue the matter prior to the implementation of a comprehensive growth policy for the region, Edmonton finally supported the annexation in May of that year.

In February, 1962 Edmonton sought to reemphasize the importance of a expanded city as envisaged by McNally. Aware of the possibility that the low income Town of Jasper Place might continue its goal of joining the city, the Amalgamation Committee employed an interesting gambit and recommended:

> that if the Town of Jasper Place applies for amalgamation with Edmonton this council should take the position that such amalgamation should be dealt with only as a part of a comprehensive adjustment of boundaries to facilitate sound and effective development of the whole metropolitan area, and to make available a more equitable sharing of industrial tax revenues to assist in paying the costs of services to residential areas, and for those purposes your committee recommends that if Jasper Place applies for amalgamation an application should be filed which would seek amalgamation with Jasper Place and a substantial adjoining area of the Municipal District of Stony Plain plus the section of the County of Strathcona containing the East Edmonton industrial area using boundaries substantially as proposed by the McNally Commission...[148]

In August Jasper Place formally applied for annexation to the city. During hearings before the LAB, Edmonton chose to argue for a more comprehensive settlement based on the conditions outlined in its council motion. Rather than accept the advice of the Minister and base its claim on planning grounds, the

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[147] "Facing the Facts of Metropolitan Development," An Address to the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce by H. Carl Goldenburg, May 4, 1960.
[148] Bettison, Kenward and Taylor, p. 266.

city's representatives opted to emphasize the financial ramifications of a boundary adjustment. This tactic proved fatal.[149] Edmonton failed in its attempt to expand its boundaries as proposed by McNally. Instead, the Local Authorities Board approved the annexation of Jasper Place, lands to the north and south of Jasper Place, and some territory from the County of Strathcona.[150] Both Sherwood Park and the petrochemical industries remained outside Edmonton's jurisdiction. The city was understandably disappointed with the decision. Although Edmonton's council immediately threatened to appeal to both the courts and the provincial cabinet, the recommendations of the LAB were implemented.

Financial problems were also being experienced by the Town of St. Albert, located approximately 3 miles nortwest of Edmonton. In 1957 the province had conferred a "new town" status on St. Albert, allowing the town to borrow $1,400,000 from the provincial goverment. The town's affairs were administered by a three man board appointed by the provincial government and four councillors elected by the town's voters. When the loan was repaid through debentures issued by the town, a cabinet order revoked the new town status, returning power to a six-man elected council. Fiscal problems persisted and in May, 1963, at the request of the town council, the Local Authorities Board took control of St. Albert's finances.[151] The board, which had full jurisdiction over budgets and the mill rate, told the town that it had to borrow $850,000 to meet debts incurred since 1961. The town's population had mushroomed from 3000 in 1959 to more than 6800 in 1963 and subsequent housing developments led to its precarious financial situation. The town was quick to share the blame with the provincial government, claiming that the Minister of Municipal Affair's revocation of St. Albert's "new Town" status had cost the municipality thousands of dollars.

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[149] Interview with Alderman Ken Newman, June 23, 1982. Newman (Mayor of Jasper Place at the time of the hearing) claims that he and Mayor Hawrelak had worked out a case for the hearings which emphasized planning and that it probably would have succeeded. Hawrelak's abrupt departure in 1963 brought Elmer Roper to office and he subsequently altered the emphasis of the city's case.

[150] For a detailed assessment of the LAB decision see Smith and Diemer, pp. 272-284.

[151] *Edmonton Journal*, May 28, 1963.

The transition to self determination was not easy for St. Albert. In 1965 three town councillors were declared out of office when it was discovered that not all votes in a recent election had been secret and that proper facilities for voting had not been provided.[152] The Minister of Municipal Affairs was forced to appoint a councillor in order to arrive at a quorum. The following year Mr. Hooke stated that "absorption by the City of Edmonton was possible."[153]

Reaction to the minister's statement was swift. The town's mayor said he was "dead against" amalgamation.[154]

The financial position of the town gradually improved and a bid to have a plebiscite on amalgamation was thwarted. Despite meetings over the next year by pro-amalgamation groups (and an eventual plebiscite in February, 1969 in which the majority of the marked ballots were in favor of a union)[155], the official town position remained opposed to a loss of St. Albert's independent status.

D. The Hanson Report and the Provincial Response

In early 1967 landowners in West Jasper Place, a two square mile parcel of land on Edmonton's western boundary, expressed an interest in joining the city. Edmonton's council balked and instead passed a motion on August 8 that a study by Dr. E.J. Hanson of the University of Alberta be commenced to examine the consequences of extending the city's boundaries in all directions. The terms of reference centered around the search for the best and most appopriate form and area of local government in the Edmonton region.[156] The study involved an examination of a number of alternative areas, the potential growth of Edmonton, the finances of the areas, and projections of public revenues for the areas compared. Dr. Hanson concluded that the city, under

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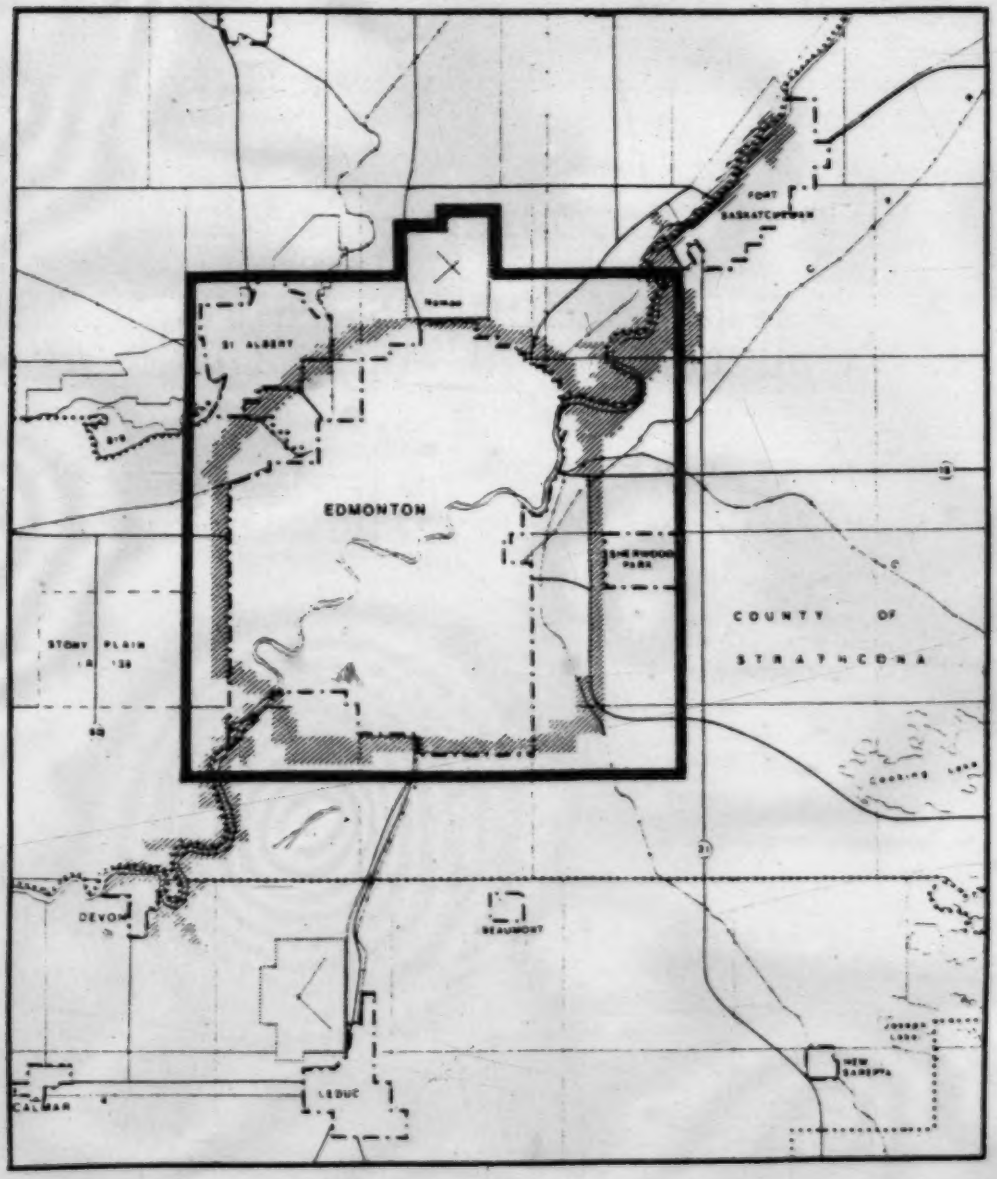
[152] *Edmonton Journal*, March 10, 1965.
[153] *Edmonton Journal*, November 9, 1966.
[154] *Edmonton Journal*, December 13, 1966.
[155] 40 percent of the 5000 eligible voters turned out. 1069 in favor, 860 against, 47 undecided.
[156] Eric J. Hanson, *The Potential Unification of the Edmonton Metropolitan Area*.(University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, 1968), p. xii.

BOUNDARIES

Existing — · — · — · — Recommended ▬▬▬▬ R.D.A ////////



jurisdiction of one council, should work toward expanding in all directions to an area of about three hundred square miles.[157]

In discussing the implementation of his recommendations, Hanson noted that the Local Authorities Board traditionally ruled on annexations and amalgamations of municipal boundaries. Highlighting the scope of his report, however, he wrote:

> The Local Authorities Board is very competent in dealing with the administrative aspects of its jurisdiction. No matter how competent an administrative board is, it should not be required to make policy. *The proper governmental structure of the Edmonton metropolitan Area is a major problem, calling for decisions by the Government of the Province of Alberta, the policy making body in this province on municipal government.* We do not think it would be fair and reasonable to ask the Local Authorities Board to make what is essentially a political decision. Regardless of the decision it made, it would be accused of being partial. ...The question of the appropriate structure and area of municipal government in the Edmonton metropolitan area is a problem of such long standing that it should be referred directly to the Government of the Province of Alberta. We do not think that the provincial government needs to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the problem. This would postpone action further into the future. Political discussion, supplemented by required studies is needed immediately to consider the whole problem.[158]

In May, 1968, the Minister of Municipal Affairs informed city council that the ramifications of the report would involve government policy on the whole matter and that, "we do not believe that it would be in the best interests of the City of Edmonton or the province to make the full recommendations of the report the subject of a total application to the LAB at this time."[159] Later that month the council enthusiastically accepted Dr. Hanson's conclusions and approved a recommendation that an annexation application be made directly to the provincial government and not the LAB. Accordingly the city applied for the annexation of West Jasper Place, a relatively small parcel of land. (In his report Hanson noted that this kind of annexation could be made effective in a short period of time.)[160] As for Hanson's main recommendations, however, the government's official position was more and more difficult to determine. In less

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[157] Ibid., pp. 220-221.
[158] Eric J. Hanson, pp 223-225. Emphasis added.
[159] Letter from the Hon. E.H. Gerhart, Minister of Municipal Affairs, to V. Dantzer, Mayor of Edmonton, May 2, 1968.
[160] Hanson, p. 221.

than two years the portfolio of Municipal Affairs changed hands four times.[161] Aside from delaying a thorough consideration of the matter, the rapid succession of ministers resulted in a series of conflicting positions on the manner in which Edmonton should proceed with its annexation application.[162] Three months after Gerhart advised against the LAB route the new minister, Harry Strom, wrote Mayor Dantzer that:

> The Government...is of the opinion that this is a matter that rightly is one for the Local Authorities Board to determine -- the Legislature has given the Board the power to resolve annexation and separation of land applications from municipalities and the Government is not disposed to alter the procedure in this instance, even though it is aware of the immensity of the task given to the Board if the Council of the City of Edmonton applies for the annexation of the land proposed in the Hanson Report.[163]

Edmonton was stymied. The city refused to apply to the board for a hearing and the provincial government was unprepared to accept the recommendations put forward by the city.

To understand why the provincial government did not react favourably to a reorganization of the Edmonton subregion one has to appreciate the manner in which political outcomes were achieved. It was not the practise of the Manning government to make snap decisions. A strong consensus was desired on policy initiatives and this required a knowledge of "all the facts" and a full debate on every issue.[164] While referring the case to the LAB for a thorough hearing was consistent with this style of decision making, the contradictory advice offered by successive ministers left Edmonton uncertain as to how it should proceed. Structural integration of the Edmonton metropolitan area did not assume a high profile in the priorities of the Department of Municipal Affairs.

As well, while the Socreds benefitted from strong rural support, in Edmonton and Calgary the percentage of their popular vote decreased

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[161] The four ministers were: Edgar H. Gerhart - appointed June 29, 1967; Harry E. Strom - appointed July 16, 1968; Edgar H. Gerhart - appointed December 12, 1968; Fred C. Colborne - appointed May 27, 1969.

[162] Interview with F. Colborne, Minister of Municipal Affairs 1968-1971, Edmonton, Alberta, 25 August, 1980 and 3 July, 1981.

[163] Letter from the Hon. H.E. Strom, Minister of Municipal Affairs, to V.M. Dantzer, Mayor of Edmonton, August 8, 1968.

[164] Interview with F. Colborne, Minister of Municipal Affairs 1968-1971, Edmonton, Alberta, 25 August, 1980 and 3 July, 1981.

significantly from 1963 until their fall from power eight years later.[165] This served to reduce any pressure for Edmonton's designs from the caucus. The opposition members were predominantly urban oriented,[166] although there is no evidence to suggest that they favoured metropolitan reform. Furthermore, the resignation, in 1968, of Premier Manning as leader of the Socreds and the subsequent leadership race and cabinet shuffle further served to obscure the issue.[167] The government's lack of action on the Hanson Report can largely be attributed to a combination of all of these factors.

The Social Credit party remained in power in Alberta until 1971. From 1968 to 1971 Edmonton's boundaries were expanded four times; on each occasion the applications were processed through the Local Authorities Board. While Edmonton had become more sophisticated in its approach to annexations through the use of outline plans, and the Local Authorities Board was becoming more sympathetic to arguments based on land use planning, the city still hoped in 1968 that the province, through the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, would finally resolve the question of boundaries and judisdiction in the metropolitan area. Provincial indifference persisted, however, and no governmental reorganization of the metropolitan subregion appeared to be under consideration. In January, 1969 the government reiterated its familiar claim that any formal application should be submitted by the city to the LAB.[168]

Of the four expansions to the city's boundaries in this period two were supported by the city and two were opposed. In 1969 residents of two forty acre lots adjacent to West Jasper Place applied to the LAB to be annexed to

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[165] In 1963, Social Credit candidates in Edmonton and Calgary captured 49% of the popular vote. The percentage dropped in 1967 and 1971 to 38%; in 1975 only 13% of those voting in Alberta's metropolitan areas supported the Socred party.

[166] This served to further limit any internal party pressure for a major change in Edmonton's boundaries. Flanagan cites a study which showed that this urban strength occured in more prosperous neighborhoods. It was unlikely that the Socreds would be inclined to offer a potential Conservative candidate in St. Albert's comfortable middle class town a further advantage by authorizing St. Albert's inclusion in an expanded Edmonton. See Flanagan, p. 7.

[167] Interview with R.C. Clark, former Leader of the Official Opposition and Minister of Education and Youth in the Manning and Strom governments, May 6, 1981.

[168] Notes from a meeting of the Minister and Edmonton officials, January 22, 1969.

the city. Despite the objections of Edmonton's city council and the Edmonton Regional Planning Commission a board order was issued in favour of the landowners' request. Similarly, the LAB overrode the objections of both groups in 1970 when it added a block of land to Edmonton's southern boundary.[169]

The two annexations supported by Edmonton were significant for their size. In 1970 the LAB approved a city-initiated application for approximately 8000 acres in the south-east where the province had acquired substantial holdings of land (which they subsequently sold to the city at cost). The Mill Woods area represented a conscious effort on the part of the provincial government to address the problem of a decreasing supply of low cost housing in Edmonton. The Minister of Municipal Affairs had earlier raised the issue with the city and agreed upon the location; Strathcona's industrial belt lay to the east and developers had holdings to the north and west.[170]

In an October 1969 meeting of the local governments in the Edmonton area the minister explained the land banking plan and attempted to determine a process for negotiating a boundary adjustment. As his remarks suggest, however, the Socred caucus and cabinet remained indifferent to Edmonton's desire for a quick provincial decision:

> The city of Edmonton has presented the Hanson Report to the provincial Government, but I don't recognize any responsibility on the part of the provincial government to accept the Hanson Report, to deal with it any other way than to look at it and consider it as what Edmonton may be saying is the answer to the problem. What I have said is that I am not prepared to refer the Hanson Report as such to the Local Authorities Board or anyone else at this point. But I am prepared, if necessary, to refer the question as to how the necessary rules that Edmonton should be accomodated to the Local Authorities Board or some other arbitration board. So I draw a distinction between solving the question of how Edmonton should expand and how the new boundaries should be drawn. And the Hanson Report as such reports only one possibility whereas I think there are many possibilities with respect to how to solve the problem.[171]

Finally, in 1971, the LAB approved an application for the annexation of land to

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[169] For a detailed description of annexations and amalgamations in the Edmonton area and the role of quasi-judicial agencies see: H.L. Diemer, "Annexations and Amalgamations in the Territorial Growth of Edmonton and Calgary" (M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1974).

[170] Interview with F. Colborne, 3 July, 1981.

[171] First Meeting of the Provincial-Municipal Committee on Boundary Changes for the City of Edmonton, *Transcript of Proceedings*, p.27.

the north. Both Edmonton and 80 percent of the landowners in the area supported the application.[172] These two annexations netted the city an additional 15,100 acres.

E. Summation

From the time the Socreds swept to power in 1935 until their defeat at the polls in 1971, the population of Edmonton grew from approximately 85,000 to 434,000, more than 500 percent (the metropolitan area accounted for 490,000 people). While other major metropolitan areas in the country were undergoing significant reorganizations of boundaries and jurisdiction with key roles performed by their respective provincial administrations, governmental initiatives at the provincial level in Alberta were noticeably absent. From 1956 until its demise as the governing party, successive Socred administrations refused to accept the arguments put forward by their own Royal Commission, and successive calls for its implementation, that Edmonton's boundaries be expanded to incorporate the metropolitan area. Nor had they been receptive to the repeated requests from the City of Edmonton that a single tier government for the region be established. While the city's area had been enlarged over the years, this was accomplished through applications to the Local Authorities Board rather than through any actions of the provincial government. As well, provincial neglect had permitted the emergence of two major dormitory satellites, ultimately complicating the metropolitan region without any evident long range strategy for regional governance.

An ideological commitment to local autonomy, a preoccupation with addressing only the fiscal ramifications of a fragmented metropolitan area, declining electoral support in the province's largest cities, and severe internal difficulties within the party especially during its last term of office all explain Social Credit's benign neglect of the capital city region. These also led to its decision to ignore the recommendations of both McNally and Hanson. At the end of their 35 years in power, as a consequence of this strategy of

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[172] Diemer, pp. 331-341.

avoidance and delay permitted by the absence of any servicing crisis, the metropolitan area of Edmonton was still without a comprehensive policy regarding the structure of regional government.

IV. The Progressive Conservative Years

A. Introduction

We continue the case study of the Edmonton metropolitan region in this chapter with an examination of the role and performance of the Progressive Conservative government in developing a structure of local government for the metropolitan area. It will be shown that just as the Socreds deferred decisions and failed to take the lead in settling the Edmonton boundary question, successive PC administrations, have been equally unwilling to resolve the issue. More importantly, however, it will be demonstrated that underlying this similar appearance of indifference lay a careful calculation of the benefits and costs of neglect. In other words, Progressive Conservative governments deferred a decision on the governmental structure of the metropolitan area as long as possible and when it was concluded that a policy statement was necessary, they opted for a decision which did little to alter the status quo.

In August, 1971, the PC party swept to power in Alberta due, in part, to a skillful rebuilding of the party under the leadership of Peter Lougheed and an increasing inability of the Socreds to change with the times. While the Socreds were viewed more and more as reflecting older, rural values, the Conservatives reflected provincial trends of "urbanization, secularization, increasing geographical mobility, and affluence."[173] Although they had not taken any position on the governmental reorganization of the province's two metropolitan centers during the campaign, the overwhelming support that they received from urban ridings served to hearten Edmonton's proponents of unitary government.[174] An examination of the party's 'guideposts', however, should have tempered any enthusiasm. Party literature of the late sixties was somewhat less than consistent. While writing that, "we believe that the proper role of the provincial

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[173] Howard Palmer and Tamara Palmer, "The 1971 Election and the Fall of Social Credit in Alberta," *Prairie Forum*, Vol. 1 No. 2 (Modern Press of Saskatoon), p. 123.

[174] J.K. Masson, "Edmonton: The Unsettled Issues of Expansion, Governmental Reform and Provincial Economic Diversification," *Politics and Government of Urban Canada: Selected Readings*, ed. L. Feldman 4th ed. (Toronto: Methuen, 1981), p. 436.

government is guidance, advice, and assistance to local government - not direction, control, and restriction of their affairs," the brochure went on to claim that, "we do not believe that the role of provincial government is passive" and "we believe that a provincial government should always have a long range plan for its future development."[173] While long range planning and a non-passive approach to issues would suggest a more active role than simply advising local governments, it will be shown that there was a plan -- one of calculated neglect.

B. Edmonton's Early Initiatives

Edmonton wasted no time in approaching the newly elected government. In February, 1972, city council considered a report from its legislative committee entitled "City Boundaries and A Unitary Form of Government: A Proposal". While the document's six recomendations closely resembled the position of previous councils, the transmittal of the motion to the metropolitan affairs committee of cabinet represented the first occasion that the Lougheed government was formally requested to act on the boundary controversy. Despite the defeat of an amendment which requested a freeze of any annexations in the Edmonton area until "the Hanson Line, or some other Line, be established by the provincial government," the council ambitiously recommended:

1. In discussions with the Metropolitan Affairs Committee emphasis should be on the fact that unitary government for the Edmonton socio-economic region is the underlying reason for extending our boundaries. The City is not merely engaged in a search for more living space.
2. That the area sought for annexation lies within the so-called Hanson Line, or an approximation of it, with particular reference to the County of Strathcona and the Municipal District of Sturgeon. The western boundary has been close to satisfactorily settled.
3. That the City recommend to the Provincial Cabinet that an independent boundaries commission, perhaps comprising one comissioner, be set up to consider and recommend on the effects of Edmonton's proposed annexation on the County and MD, and to set the boundaries. Membership on the Commission should be chosen from outside the Province. Included in the commission's terms of reference would be a study on the economic impact of expansion on the city and surrounding municipalities.
4. That the City request the Province to prohibit piece-meal annexations unless they are acceptable to the City; that is, that those initiating them agree beforehand to meet conditions described by the City, including land

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[173] Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta, *What Do We Stand For?* (Edmonton, 1967).

dedication and price of land sold to the City for municipal purposes.

5. That the City recommend to the Provincial Government that a green belt be established outward from the City limits a distance of 10 - 15 miles in which further urban development of any kind be limited to parcels of not less than 40 acres.
6. That the City request the Province to pay for the proposed ring road around the City, regardless of its location inside or outside Edmonton's boundaries now or in the future.[176]

Reaction to the city's proposal was swift and predictable. Spokesmen for the counties of Strathcona and Parkland, the municipal district of Sturgeon and the towns of St. Albert and Fort Saskatchewan expressed total opposition to any application by the city. The jurisdictions affected by an expansion of Edmonton's boundaries as envisaged in the Hanson Report insisted that Edmonton channel its application through the LAB pursuant to provisions of the Municipal Government Act, which they considered "the only tribunal with lawful authority to rule on the matter."[177]

The provincial cabinet remained silent. Newly elected members, however, were not so restrained. During the spring session of 1972 St. Albert's new PC MLA used his maiden speech to blast Edmonton's desire to expand. Accusing Mayor Dent and council of 'empire building schemes', blaming 'big business interests' for pressuring for a larger city, and extolling the virtues of small town life, Mr. Jamieson swore an unending fight against annexation.[178]

The new government was obviously not prepared to make Edmonton's boundary proposal a priority item. Responding to an opposition question concerning the possible creation of an independent commission to examine Edmonton's proposal, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Hon. Dave Russell, told the legislature that the government was "unable to consider the complex annexation submission in detail because of the demands of the session."[179] The spring sitting ended without further discussion of Edmonton's boundaries.

Pressure for a decision, however, was building. The city remained committed to the Hanson boundary proposal; the province appeared equally as

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[176] Edmonton City Council Minutes, February 28, 1972.
[177] *Edmonton Journal* March 10, 1972.
[178] Legislative Assembly of Alberta, *Hansard* 17th Legislature 1st Session (10 March 1972), pp. 8-46 - 8-50.
[179] Legislative Assembly of Alberta, *Hansard* 17th Legislature 1st Session (29 March 1972), p. 20-11.

determined not to make a decision. In July the issue was kept public when Mayor Dent indicated that a decision, pro or con, was necessary.[130] "If we're limited in the area we can get, the province should work to set up satellite towns or cities at least 30 miles from our borders - preferably 60 miles."[131] Later that summer the *Edmonton Journal* editorally condemned the new government for its lack of action.[132]

The matter had already been set aside during the first sitting. New Conservative MLAs representing the jurisdictions affected by the city's proposal were adamantly opposed to the Hanson Line and there existed little popular support in the Edmonton metropolitan area for a large boundary expansion. Applying Smallwood's calculus to these facts suggested a rather dismal chance for ambitious reform in the area.

There were few, if any, signals coming from the cabinet that heartened Edmonton's city council. The Tories had campaigned on a poorly defined notion of economic 'decentralization' that had never been well developed during the campaign. And, despite the election and subsequent appointment to executive council of a former Edmonton alderman who had strongly argued in favour of expansion, unification of the Edmonton metropolitan area did not appear to have a sympathetic hearing in cabinet.[133]

Nevertheless, the government believed that it had to do something to deflect mounting pressure from city council and the central city newspaper. Adopting an approach of former Social Credit administrations, cabinet decided to appoint a boundaries commission to study the matter. It was recognized that this manner of proceeding with the unpopular issue would relieve some of the

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[130] Ivor Dent was a former provincial NDP president. His provincial political affiliation reflected a trend in Edmonton; with minor exceptions no mayor of the last three decades has been a prominent member of the party in office provincially.

[131] *Edmonton Journal* July 26, 1972.

[132] Ibid, August 8, 1972.

[133] Neil Crawford, Edmonton alderman from 1966-1971 favoured the Hanson report and publicly objected to Mayor Dent's decision to emphasize the annexation of 'open areas' rather than 'developed industrial and residential areas.' *Edmonton Journal* October 24, 1969. Crawford has held three portfolios: Health and Social Development, Labour, and Attorney General.

political pressure.[184]

A month later the province was finalizing its plans for just such a committee. In a confidential memo to the premier, Mr. Russell clearly indicated that a single government for the metropolitan area was not favored:

> The City of Edmonton has a long history concerning its present and future boundaries. Last March the City officially requested the Province to appoint an out-of -Province one-man Commission to recommend on the City's "Unitary Government" proposal, which involves extending the boundaries to the so-called "Hanson Line". Edmonton's neighbours reacted very strongly against the proposal and are now preparing to oppose it...
> Edmonton's approach is based on a concept of "Unitary Government", i.e., they wish long-range control over planning and development, under one overall authority, as much as they wish the City, per se, to become larger. The present City, in fact could accomodate upwards of 850,000 persons...
> *I believe it would be very desirable to settle the Edmonton dispute now. Edmonton would have to be assured that the control they desire is in fact being given by some other means. The timing for the Province to give that assurance is excellent.*[185]

Soon after, the Minister publicly introduced the possibility of developing a form of government for the region other than Edmonton's preferred unitary concept. In an address to the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties Mr. Russell stated:

> I do not believe the way to effectively control rapid industrial and residential growth is necessarily to have the areas involved all come under the jurisdiction of one huge municipality.[186]

Immediate attention would not be given to resolving metropolitan boundaries. Russell indicated that there were 'hot spots' in the province that would require resolution "prior to the time when we can establish a municipal boundaries policy."[187] The new government appeared equally as unwilling to resolve the issue as previous administrations.

The Municipal and School Boundaries Advisory Commission came into existence by order in council in January 1973. The five man committee included a permanent chairman, a representative of the Alberta Association of Municipal

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[184] In a letter dated October 20, 1972, the Hon. Lou Hyndman, the Minister of Education wrote to the Minister of Municipal Affairs that "It seems to me that a lot of the pressure and scrapping could be materially reduced if people knew that there would be a boundary review, recognizing that this would take time."
[185] Memorandum from the Hon. D.J. Russell, Minister of Municipal Affairs, to Hon. P. Lougheed, November 15, 1972.(emphasis added)
[186] *Edmonton Journal* November 18, 1972.
[187] Ibid.

Districts and Counties, one from the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, one from the Alberta School Trustees Association, and a citizen at large. The terms of reference, as outlined by the minister, included:

1. To recommend the Municipal and School Boundaries that will most adequately and equitably provide for the orderly administration of school and municipal services.
2. To hold hearings and receive representations from interested persons and groups and to give consideration to their views relative to the establishment of boundaries.[188]

The city's reaction to this initiative was cool. Mayor Dent expressed his disappointment that the provincial government had not adopted council's recommendation of a single outside 'expert' to assess the merits of unitary government as they applied to the Edmonton area. Reservations were also registered over the composition of the commission; Dent argued that municipal representatives would not be able to rid themselves of their own biases. On these grounds the mayor suggested that it was likely that council would continue to go to the cabinet committee rather than to the newly formed Boundaries Advisory Committee.[189]

The province, however, appeared determined to continue deferring the matter of Edmonton's boundaries. Questioned in the legislature on the government's intentions, the minister replied that there had been no change in the province's attitude; in other words a "slow and cold" study of the city case. Attempting to depoliticize the issue, Russell made it clear that Edmonton had three options to push its case for unitary government:

> They may still wish to pursue their application for expansion of boundaries directly with the provincial government. They always have the option, of course, of going directly to the Local Authorities Board, or they may wish to work with the other municipalities through the auspices of the Boundary Advisory Committee.[190]

None of the options outlined in the assembly was particularly palatable to the city. Edmonton had insisted for years that the determination of structure of government for the metropolitan area was a political decision and that the provincial cabinet was the only body with the power to bring about a

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[188] Government of Alberta, Order-in-Council No. 1109/73.
[189] *Edmonton Journal* February 6, 1973.
[190] Alberta Hansard February 27, 1973.

resolution to this long standing issue. The LAB route was not favoured: the city was still stinging from its application in 1964 when that quasi-judicial body had ruled that the city must take over the under-serviced, tax-poor municipality of Jasper Place yet leave untouched tax-rich refinery row on its eastern boundary. Negotiations with surrounding jurisdictions had already been explored; everyone's position was well known.

In an attempt to increase pressure for a decision the city council, on March 12, passed a resolution which made it city policy that water services to surrounding jurisdictions would not increase until the annexation and amalgamation issue was resolved.[191] Although the province was silent (they said that there was little public comment to make) affected jurisdictions took the opportunity to attack the city for unfairly using its position as the only water supplier in order to push its plan for boundary expansion.[192] The MD of Sturgeon, for example, pointed out that plans for an industrial park just northwest of Edmonton had been thwarted because St. Albert, dependent on Edmonton for its own water supply, could not guarantee an increased supply as a result of the city's resolution. One unidentified alderman observed that "we've got a water pistol pointed at their heads."[193]

Edmonton was not content with this stop gap measure. At the direction of council the city's planning department prepared a document once again outlining Edmonton's case for an expanded boundary. In a 92 page report entitled "The Future of This City" a two phase solution to fragmented and piecemeal annexation was advanced. Phase one included a recommendation that the city immediately expand its boundaries to the proposed ring road and that the government undertake a comprehensive study of the financial implications of a major boundary adjustment. Upon completion of the study phase two was to be implemented and Edmonton's boundaries would be expanded to include St. Albert and Sherwood Park.

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[191] City Council Minutes, March 12, 1973.
[192] *Edmonton Journal* June 5, 1973.
[193] Ibid.

Mayor Dent, in releasing the report, sharply criticized the former Social Credit government that "could not or would not" solve the boundary problems.[194] This latest challenge to the new government attempted to anticipate some of the more obvious criticism that would be levelled at the report. Sherwood Park and St. Albert would have branch city halls in an effort to keep the government 'closer to the people' and prime agricultural land would be preserved through the land use designation metropolitan-agricultural. These concessions of course did not mask the city's intent which was to push for a boundary expansion that had been recommended since the McNally Royal Commission in 1956. Neither the province nor the affected jurisdictions were receptive to Edmonton's initiative.

In August, the Minister of Municipal Affairs wrote Mayor Dent that the scope of Edmonton's proposal was "far removed from the direction we held in my office with respect to the matter."[195] At that time the talks touched on the possibility that a proposed outer ring road might be considered the city boundary instead of the 300 square mile Hanson line. While the proposed ring road was referred to in phase one of the "Future of This City", the sum total of the recommendations in the report far exceeded the interpretation Mr. Russell placed on talks with city officials. Edmonton was anxious for the province to respond to the boundary question; the province remained silent.

The provincial bureaucracy did not appear sympathetic to the concept of a unitary structure of government for the metropolitan area. Unlike British Columbia, where officials in the Department of Municipal Affairs slowly and subtly introduced a form of metropolitan government for the greater Vancouver area (see chapter two), provincial public servants in Alberta favoured further study of the issue. While Edmonton was pressing its "Future of the City" case before cabinet, the director of the province's Task Force on "Urbanization and the Future" wrote city officials that, as a final position on metropolitan growth, the document was inadequate. Specifically the director noted:

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[194] *Edmonton Journal* July 27, 1973.
[195] *Edmonton Journal* August 9, 1973.

> I felt uneasy about its polemic quality. References to adjoining municipalities meddling in urban issues they do not understand, the general perimeter chaos, the inconsequential nature of the regional nature. The picture this conjures up is the city as an island of efficient planning surrounded by a sea of incompetence and chaos. I think most of the other metropolitan municipalities would regard these suggestions as insulting without the redeeming virtue of being true, and to a large extent I would agree with them.[196]

Furthermore, Edmonton's planning staff had successfully pressured the Edmonton Regional Planning Commission to undertake a Metropolitan Growth Study.[197] It was suggested by provincial officials that the outcome of the study should be released before any change was made to the governmental structure of the region. Ironically this city initiated study was used as a pretext not to proceed with a comprehensive boundary settlement.

C. A Statement on the Future of This City

Despite these deliberate efforts by the province to defer the issue the city declined to let its most recent effort at governmental integration die. At a special meeting on October 1, 1973 city council decided to eliminate the proposed phase one expansion of its boundaries and to opt instead for ultimate expansion as outlined in its re-named report "A Statement on the Future of This City". Substantially unaltered from the original document, the version approved by council echoed the McNally Royal Commission and the Hanson Report in listing six principles that the city felt necessary for good government in the metropolitan area:

1. The urbanized area should be contained in one governing unit to optimize long-range, comprehensive planning for the area. Comprehensive planning, to be meaningful, requires the integration of political, administrative, economic, social and physical planning. An urbanized area which is in fact one social and economic unit can be more efficiently and effectively governed by one municipal authority, however structured, than by a multiplicity of local

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[196] Letter from Mr. Frank Marlyn, Director of the Task Force On Urbanization And The Future, to Mr. Walter Walchuk, Coordinator of Planning, City of Edmonton; September 10, 1973.

[197] Interview with Mark McCullough (a senior Edmonton planner attached to the annexation project) June 17, 1982. Meetings were held with the public and municipal councils in the Edmonton area to identify objectives for metropolitan growth. A series of discussion papers were published and the final report was released in March, 1977. It presented four alternative growth strategies and Edmonton, with reservations, offered qualified support for a plan calling for two thirds of future growth in the region to locate in Edmonton, St. Albert, and Sherwood Park.

governing bodies.

2. Local government has responsibility for the social and economic well-being of its citizens. It must have under its jurisdiction a supply of land adequate to meet residential, recreational, and industrial needs, both immediate and long term.
3. The responsibility for the burdens of the services and facilities in a large urban community should be equitably shared by all the beneficiaries in the immediate urban area. Conversely, the benefits of the services and facilities in a large urban community should be equitably shared by all those bearing the burdens.
4. An urban form of government should govern urban areas. A rural form of government should govern rural areas. Urban governments are neither designed nor equipped to govern rural areas. Rural goverments are neither designed nor equipped to govern urban areas. Citizens have a right to a form of government that reflects their style of life.
5. The form which local government shall take is the responsibility of the provincial government. The provincial government has the duty to carry out its responsibility in a decisive and timely manner. This duty includes periodic reviews of local government forms and boundaries to ensure that these reflect the current and forseeable social, political, and economic situation. Local government should be so organized that the area benefiting from given services is contained within its boundaries in order that joint federal-provincial-municipal services can be coordinated efficiently.
6. A sufficient amount of local autonomy must be maintained to enable local government to carry out its responsibilities effectively and efficiently.[198]

Although enthusiasm for the report and its echo of the McNally recommendations was not unanimous in council, Edmonton's elected representatives approved a commissioner's recommendation that the report be submitted to the Minister of Municipal Affairs as the position of the city on the form of future government for the region. One month later Mayor Dent wrote to Premier Lougheed and the cabinet making a 'formal application' to have its boundaries amended in accordance with its report. In his letter Dent argued, "We believe that a basic policy decision on urban form by your government is required. Since that decision should be taken by cabinet in any event, we have directed this letter to you expecting that you will be looking to your Minister of Municipal Affairs, or perhaps your Metropolitan Affairs Committee, for advice."[199]

Although the Lougheed government had been in power for over two years, the Edmonton boundary dispute had not been a high priority issue. At the close of 1973, the Minister of Municipal Affairs finally concluded that it was the wish of city council that the city's boundary proposal be considered directly

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[198] City of Edmonton, *A Statement on the Future of This City*, October, 1973, pp. 39-46.
[199] *Edmonton Journal* November 9, 1973.

by the cabinet. Citing a preoccupation with energy matters, Mr. Russell noted that the Edmonton plan would be given attention early in the new year.[200]

Any attention given to Edmonton's latest initiative was short lived. In January the Conservatives employed a familiar tactic when they asked Edmonton to consider ideas advanced in a proposed new provincial planning act before acting on the annexation proposal. Reminiscent of previous endeavours which served to defer the development of a policy for governing the Edmonton metropolitan area, the province advanced a relatively vague proposal which would establish metropolitan planning regions for the capital city and Calgary which would set out development proposals for the areas, subject to the approval of the planning commission, and then the cabinet. The government asked for reaction to its document and placed a June 30 deadline on submissions. The minister indicated, however, that this deadline might well be extended to allow additional time for public reaction.[201] The technique produced the usual results; the Edmonton area witnessed an abrogation of provincial responsibilities for more decisive direction, the population of the suburban dormitories gained added confidence in their municipal autonomy, and city council (and its corporate policy planners) became more frustrated and anxious for a a resolution of this continuing 'issue.' The province, while admittedly preoccupied with other issues, once again deflected the matter of metropolitan jurisdiction.

The Edmonton boundary dispute was further deferred in March of 1974 as the minister refused to outline any definite time table on the question of annexation when asked in the assembly for an indication when the city's bid would be determined.[202] Despite "favourable meetings" between Edmonton MLAs and local aldermen the cabinet seemed undecided on the amalgamation question. The provincial government's wish to build "two good metropolitan cities" appeared to conflict with their policy of decentralizing industry and directing economic activity to smaller urban areas.[203]

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[200] *Edmonton Journal* December 18, 1973.
[201] *Edmonton Journal* January 25, 1974.
[202] Legislative Assembly of Alberta, *Hansard* 17th Legislature 3rd Session (19 March 1974), p. 356.
[203] *Edmonton Journal* May 1, 1974.

The province's desire not to approve an expansion of Edmonton's boundaries was made more evident after Premier Lougheed met with the city's mayor in November. Mayor Hawrelak informed the media that "the government is not prepared to take any action now. The premier feels that with our present space we have plenty of scope for expansion and development. He doesn't feel cities should be allowed to grow for growth's sake."[204] Premier Lougheed had also indicated that any annexation should not destroy something "historical and traditional", in direct reference to the Town of St. Albert.

D. A New Term and Amendments to the LAB Act

The government went to the polls on March 26, 1975 and was returned with a massive majority.[205] The traditional one-party dominance that had characterized Alberta politics since the province's entry into confederation was restored. The timing of the election had also been excellent for the Conservatives, for the Lougheed 'team' had successfully managed to keep the Syncrude project alive and the provincial treasurer announced in February that the government intended to lower personal income taxes (making them the lowest in Canada).[206] The outcome of the election was never in doubt. The Conservative platform focused on housing, the establishment of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and the healthy state of the Alberta economy.[207] Municipal affairs, and Edmonton's boundary dispute in particular, were not discussed. On April 3, the new cabinet was sworn in and Dick Johnston, a newly elected MLA from Lethbridge, replaced Dave Russell as Minister of Municipal Affairs.

The new minister waited nine months before he introduced any legislation. In December, 1975, Bill 73, The Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, was debated in the legislature. Aside from dealing with conflict of interest for municipal politicians, the bill also sought to reduce the power of the Local

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[204] *Edmonton Journal*, November 9, 1974.
[205] With 63 percent of the popular vote, the Conservatives exceeded any mandate ever received by an Alberta party in a general election.
[206] David K. Elton and Arthur M. Goddard, "The Conservative Takeover, 1971-," *Society and Politics in Alberta* edited by Carlo Caldarola (Toronto:Methuen, 1979) p. 62.
[207] *The Platform of the Alberta P.C. Party and its Candidates, 1975.*

Authorities Board by allowing the executive council to ratify or reject annexation decisions. Prior to the amendment the LAB had had the power to issue a board order, after a hearing, either rejecting a petition for annexation or approving it and specifying the conditions for its enactment. Bill 73, according to the minister, would facilitate the implementation of an overall growth policy:

> I think that indeed the decision we are making today with respect to bringing back those major decisions - major decisions because they affect in such a real way the policy directives and the expansion and development of the cities and of the towns of a smaller size - is really one of the key things in trying to determine what might be described as an urban policy for Alberta.
>
> Really...it would be unfair for politicians to abrogate that responsibility which is really a political decision, a decision which cannot be avoided because of the major consequences, and should not be left to an agency or to independent individuals without recourse as to a decision which is so critical to the expression of cities around us.[208]

The impetus for a political assessment of decisions rendered by the quasi-judicial LAB arose from events in the Calgary area. Unlike Edmonton, the City of Calgary had managed to expand its municipal boundaries as population increased on its borders and had attained the McNally boundaries. While St. Albert and Sherwood Park developed into dormitory communities outside of Edmonton's city limits, the urbanized area of Calgary essentially evolved under a single jurisdiction. Acting on the recommendations of the McNally Royal Commission, Calgary carried on an extensive program of annexation between 1961 and 1964 resulting in an increase in its size from 76.1 to 155.8 square miles.[209]

In October, 1974, a proposal to add 125 square miles to the city's area was put before the people in a plebiscite. It was overwhelmingly rejected. The apparent desire of the citizenry to contain the growth of Calgary was not long heeded. As one Calgary MLA pointed out during second reading of the bill to "allow some recourse to the provincial cabinet":

> Subsequently, the Local Authorities Board ruled against an annexation proposal for the northwest part of the city, which consisted of 2,400 acres. The city subsequently appealed to the Alberta Supreme Court, and the new hearings took place in March of this year. The Local Authorities Board then granted the city's petition, so the 2,400

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[208] Legislative Assembly of Alberta, *Hansard* 18th Legislature 1st Session (8 December 1975), pp. 1468-1469.
[209] Nader, p. 352.

> acres is to become a part of the city on January 1, 1976. Also since this plebiscite, half a dozen or so piecemeal annexation applications from developers with property on the city's boundaries have been presented to the city and to the Local Authorities Board. The total area covered by these annexation applications is approximately 30 square miles.
>
> ...Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see this bill bringing into the political arena the approvals regarding annexation.[210]

Further support for the inclusion of a political assessment in boundary decisions was contained in the Alberta Land Use Forum.[211] Established in October, 1973, to study a broad range of land use matters, the three-man forum released its report in January, 1976, and included in its recommendations that "all changes in urban and rural boundaries require Executive Council approval."[212]

The passage of Bill 73 provided little comfort to proponents of a larger Edmonton. The Conservative government refused to depart from its position that the LAB act as the adjudicator of annexation requests, much to the chagrin of local politicians and the central city newspaper.[213]

The report of the Land Use Forum, however, did sustain the overall objective of those advocating expanded municipal boundaries. Echoing the findings of the 20 year old McNally Royal Commission, the Hanson Report, and the Statement on the Future of This City, the independent body noted:

> It is the opinion of the Forum that the City of Edmonton must be accorded adequate influence over development in its region. The most desirable way to achieve the necessary influence... is within a unitary system of local government for the metropolitan region. This would mean the amalgamation of Edmonton City with some rural and urban areas in the Edmonton region. The consequence of not following this course of action is that a regional system of government will inevitably be established. This system has not been shown to be effective. [214]

The provincial government remained silent.

The question of Edmonton's boundaries surfaced again in September 1976 when a group of developers and landowners applied to the LAB to have 3800 acres annexed to the city's western border. Despite advice from the civic administration to oppose the bid at the public hearings, the council split on the

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[210] Alberta Hansard December 8, 1975.
[211] The members of the Land Use Forum were Dr.V.A. Wood, J.E. Davies, and R.W. Brown.
[212] Alberta Land Use Forum, *Summary of Final Report*, January 1976, p. xviii.
[213] See for example the editorial in the *Edmonton Journal* October 2, 1975.
[214] Alberta Land Use Forum, p. xxiv.

issue and was unable to decide on opposing or supporting the annexation. At the next meeting of the city fathers, three council members asked for a complete review of the city's expansion policy and instructed the planning department to consider hiring consultants.[215]

While no official provincial position appeared to be imminently forthcoming on the form of government for the region, there were signs that the cabinet remained opposed to a single-tier arrangement. In November, senior ministers in the Lougheed cabinet hinted that "some sort of metropolitan government" was possible. Furthermore, when the province announced that it had granted city status to St. Albert effective January 1, 1977, several Edmonton aldermen interpreted the move as a provincial stand against unitary government. The Minister of Municipal Affairs refused to comment on the implications of St. Albert's new status, but claimed that the move was only symbolic.[216]

In February of the next year city council's legislative committee recommended spending over $16,000 for an economic analysis of annexing land between the current city boundaries and the inner edge of the half-mile wide Restricted Development Area cordon around the city.[217] On the basis of that study, as well as reports prepared by the civic administration, Edmonton's city council approved the following two recommendations:

1. That the City of Edmonton submit the attached application to the Premier as Chairman of the Executive Council in support of the immediate inclusion in Edmonton of land beyond the present City limits and up to the inner limit of the Restricted Development Area.
2. That the City of Edmonton request the Provincial Government to determine the appropriate form and boundaries of local government in the Edmonton Metropolitan Area.[218]

Reaction was swift and predictable. The County of Strathcona, once again, stood to lose tax-rich refinery row. The reeve of the county acknowledged that the annexation proposal was "not the first time it's happened", and added

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[215] *Edmonton Journal* September 15, 1976.
[216] *Edmonton Journal*, November 10, 1976.
[217] In 1974, Restricted Development Areas (RDAs) were established by the provincial government in 11 areas in the province, including Edmonton and Calgary. According to the government they were designed to "provide umbrella zoning" and "freezing land for major urban parks." See Lionel D. Feldman and Katherine A. Graham, *Bargaining for Cities*, (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1979), pp. 72-78.
[218] Edmonton City Council Minutes, September 7, 1977.

"we will fight with everything at our disposal."[219]

The provincial government refused to make any commitment on the RDA proposal. Despite a reported 'informal agreement' between Edmonton area MLAs and local politicians on an expansion of the city's boundaries to the RDA, the Minister of Municipal Affairs stated that the government would "consider a number of metropolitan area studies now under way before it sets an Edmonton growth policy."[220]

Edmonton's appeal for a cabinet decision on the eventual size of its boundaries apparently fell on deaf ears once again. In the absence of any obvious crisis the province was unprepared to hurry to resolve Edmonton's concerns especially when surrounding communities maintained that any proposal for an alteration to the existing borders must be processed through the Local Authorities Board.[221] This reduced the pressure on the cabinet to intervene and permitted a calculated null response. Nevertheless, representatives of the city continued to argue in favour of a political decision at the executive council level and Mayor Purves (elected in 1977) sought to promote the RDA proposal in discussions with neighboring jurisdictions.

The discussions were not, of course, successful. Edmonton was not the only municipality in the metropolitan area that wanted to expand and in 1977 the City of St. Albert applied to the LAB to annex approximately 4,900 acres for light industrial purposes, territory which took in RDA land as far as Edmonton's northwest boundary. Although originally denied intervenor status in the formal hearings, a successful court case enabled Edmonton's counsel to argue that St. Albert had a dismal record of opening up new industrial land and that within their existing boundaries they already had enough land for 20 years. The LAB ruled that 2,450 acres should be added to St. Albert; an order in council reduced the amount to 980 acres.[222]

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[219] *Edmonton Journal* September 17, 1977.
[220] Ibid. February 3, 1978.
[221] *Edmonton Journal* February 9, 1978.
[222] *Edmonton Journal* March 7, 1978.

Further political pressure was put on the provincial government to put off a cabinet decision on Edmonton's boundary request when the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, at their 1978 annual spring convention, adopted a resolution from the County of Strathcona urging the provincial government to "uphold the authority and function of the Local Authorities Board in annexation applications."[233]

The public provincial response to the expansionist desires of the bickering jurisdictions in the Edmonton metropolitan area took the form of further amendments to the Local Authorities Board. Bill 38, The Municipal Government Amendment Act, 1978, received first reading on April 26. It sought to broaden further the powers of cabinet by allowing executive council not only to amend or reject LAB recommendations but also to vary them or to prescribe conditions.

During second reading debate, government spokesmen cited five principles considered worthy of adoption when evaluating the recommendations of the LAB:

> The first is that annexation orders approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council should conform to government policy respecting the development of the province, the diversification of activity throughout the province, or the decentralization of activity. Secondly, there is the need that actions should be consistent one with another. Thirdly, there is the need to provide a solution to problems of anticipated growth, particularly around a small number of centres in Alberta, perhaps most obviously the metropolitan centres of Edmonton and Calgary. Fourthly, there is the need to act with a minimum amount of intervention respecting recomendations of the Local Authorities Board. Fifthly, there is the need to bring annexation proceedings to an expeditious conclusion.[234]

Specific reference was made to the province's metropolitan areas by David King, the young backbencher who piloted the bill through the legislature. In a display of political acumen that no doubt contributed to his eventual elevation to the front benches he perhaps unconsciously betrayed the

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[233] Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, *Convention Handbook, 1978*(Edmonton, 1978), pp. 110-111. The province responded to the Association's resolution with the following statement: "The government intends to continue to utilize the LAB to deal with annexation requests and thus provide municipalities affected by such requests with a forum at which municipal concerns can be expressed." Ibid.

[234] Legislative Assembly of Alberta, *Hansard*, 18th Legislature 4th Session (15 May 1968), p. 1244.

administration's drift:

> It is particularly true that adjacent to metropolitan areas, the question of annexation is not exclusively technical. It is not exclusively based on empirical considerations. But just as it is not exclusively technical, it is also not exclusively political. Both the technical and the political aspects are important components of the final decision that is going to be made respecting annexation.[225]

Although Bill 38 finally vested in cabinet the ability to develop an urban policy (through its new power to alter LAB decisions), the province in the case of Edmonton's boundary dispute insisted that the LAB route still be followed.[226] Thus the decision on the LAB amendments was in reality a postponing tactic on the basic dispute over reorganization. While accepting that any eventual solution would now contain a shrewd dose of political calculation, the Tories once again continued their depoliticizing tactic by deferring the issue pending further technical study.

Planning personnel within Edmonton's Corporate Policy Planning Branch not only realized that further negotiations were futile, but were finally able to convince city council to act. Convinced by their experience with LAB activities that a major series of technical studies were required to pursue their goal of an enlarged city successfully, they pressured city council to approve a one million dollar budget as the basis of an LAB application.[227] Once again, municipal bureaucrats persuaded the politicians to pursue the metropolitan odyssey.

E. The 1978 Annexation Application

The quasi-judicial route had become inevitable. An attempt by the minister to pursue a solution to the boundary question through negotiation failed miserably. In July, 1978, he had called together the mayors and reeves of the affected jurisdictions. The battle lines were quickly drawn. Little agreement was found on the matters of regional utilities, the RDA, the distribution of assessment base, and the mechanisms for provincial and inter-municipal cooperation. When the minister concluded his own personal preference on the

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[225] Ibid.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Interview with Mark McCullough, and with David Podmore, senior planner and Director of the City of Edmonton Annexation Project, August 29, 1980.

future form of government with the statement that it was "unlikely that [a] unicity form of government will be the end result" only the mayor of Edmonton expressed reservations.[228] In fact, notes from the meeting suggest that the Conservatives were not prepared to implement any serious structural changes to the metropolitan area in the first place. Regional government was dismissed and instead the minister expressed a preference for intermunicipal arrangements for services, utilities, and transportation.

Nonetheless, city staff had begun to spend the initial one million dollar annexation allocation. Senior professionals from the administration and independent consultants (the annexation 'team') were charged with the responsibility of bringing forward recommendations to form the basis of a comprehensive application. As early as September, Edmonton's mayor acknowledged that proposals under consideration could affect

> more than thirty-five thousand property owners; five municipal or county jurisdictions; ten school board jurisdictions; and a wide range of special interest groups including several of the largest industrial concerns in north-central Alberta, religious organizations, Federal Government agencies, non-profit representative organizations, and a number of property owner associations.[229]

The city's application, filed with the LAB on March 21, 1979, confirmed the unprecedented scope of the proposed annexation.[230] Edmonton was seeking to expand its borders to include the City of St. Albert, the *entire* County of Strathcona,[231] and portions of the Counties of Parkland and Sturgeon. If approved, Edmonton's most audacious challenge to the province would increase its size by approximately 730 square miles. By taking the quais-judicial route in this manner, the city was essentially trying to usurp the provincial initiative in metropolitan reorganization and force an ennunciation of, and optimally, a change

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[228] Notes from a meeting of the minister and others, July 12, 1978.
[229] Letter from Mayor Cec Purves to the chairman of the Local Authorities Board, Dr. D.A. Bancroft, September 27, 1978.
[230] City of Edmonton, *The Basis of an Application by the City of Edmonton to the Local Authorities Board of the Province of Alberta, March 20, 1979* (Edmonton, 1979).
[231] Fred Colbourne, former Socred Minister of Municipal Affairs, called this move 'brilliant'. Attempts in the past to acquire Refinery Row or Sherwood Park failed because authorities feared that the loss of these areas would emasculate the tax base of the remaining portion of the county. Interview with F. Colbourne, Minister of Municipal Affairs 1968-1971, Edmonton, Alberta, 25 August, 1980 and 3 July, 1981.

in the obvious provincial strategy over the years.

In June of that year the province again introduced amendments to the Local Authorities Board which set the stage for lengthy and detailed hearings. Bill 18, The Local Authorities Board Amendment Act, 1979, allowed executive council to appoint a special three man panel to hear the Edmonton annexation application: prior to the amendment the statute had provided for a maximum of three LAB members. The three commissioners subsequently appointed to the special panel by the government were J.V.H. Milvain, a retired Chief Justice of the Trial Division, Supreme Court of Alberta, Tom Lauder, a long-time member of the Board, and Ralph Brown, a former reeve of the southern Alberta rural municipality of Kneehill (and member of the Land Use Forum).

By virtue of the amendment to the LAB Act it was clear that Edmonton's application was not considered a conventional annexation by the province. Nonetheless, the LAB panel followed a judicial-like route, with legal counsel retained by all affected jurisdictions. Neither provincial politicians nor bureaucrats played a role in the process after the application had been submitted. As well, Edmonton's city council was not directly involved.[232] Hearings on the city's application commenced on September 25, 1979. The board received information for 105 days, concluding the hearing on July 24, 1980, after more than 12,000 pages of transcript were recorded in the often tedious exercise of examination and cross-examination of expert witnesses.[233] Money seemed to be of no concern to the parties involved in a process reminescent of the Redcliffe-Maud Royal Commission. More than 180 people appeared before the board and 299 exhibits were filed in the most detailed examination ever of the Edmonton boundary dispute. Despite the venue, Edmonton city had had its royal commission incurred on its own initiative.

Edmonton's case was as classic as it was ambitious. The case, albeit embellished with local detail, was typical of those put forward by other North

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[232] For an assessment of the appropriateness of the LAB route see Plunkett and Lightbody, pp. 207-221.

[233] The solicitor for the County of Strathcona went so far as to file letters from both the author and publisher of a book to 'prove' that a source had been incorrectly cited in one of Edmonton's briefs.

American proponents of centripetal metropolitan reorganization. The city supported its position on the basis of six major arguments: efficient land use, rational boundaries, the accountability of single tier government, equitable taxation, integrated services, and environmental protection. It argued:

> the City of Edmonton is the highly predominant population centre of the region. It is a vital and heterogeneous core to the metropolitan area. The twin satellites of St. Albert and Sherwood Park are essentially dormitories of the City. These pockets of high income populations are free to use many of the services provided by the City but have isolated themselves from the social, political, and financial costs of servicing specialized population groups that a regional unit must share. To manage and direct future population growth equitably will require the creation of a single governmental jurisdiction with the power to act--authoritatively.[234]

For over 25 years the language and emphasis remained substantially unaltered.[235]

While four separate jurisdictions were affected by Edmonton's application, St. Albert and the County of Strathcona stood to lose the most. The time and money spent by these jurisdictions reflected their concern. In language pioneered by the American theoreticians, they sought to counter Edmonton's unitary proposal by arguing in favour of independent yet cooperative local governments:

> Because of the characteristics of the Edmonton area, particularly the sheer size of the central city relative to the urban settlements outside the city, many matters that would be seen as 'area-wide' matters in other metropolitan settings are largely 'city-wide' matters here and fall within the City's responsibility. Others are to a large extent matters of Provincial responsibility. The area-wide questions to be dealt with are really *inter-municipal* matters that can be handled to a considerable extent on an inter-municipal rather than a metropolitan basis; they do not, in any event, require restructuring of the local government system, as Edmonton proposes. To the extent that there may be fiscal problems to be corrected, they do not require massive boundary shifts but should be dealt with directly through fiscal mechanisms.[236]

Both the city case and the rebuttal by its antagonists borrowed extensively from the British and American literature and experience; those opposed to unitary government found the GVRD model ideal.[237]

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[234] Dr. Lloyd Axworthy and Dr. Jim Lightbody, *The Reorganization of Local Government in the Metropolitan Edmonton Area*,(Edmonton, 1979), p. 7.
[235] For a summary of the city's case see: City of Edmonton, *Submission to the Local Authorities Board of Alberta on behalf of the City of Edmonton: Written Argument* (Edmonton, 1980).
[236] Comay Planning Consultants Ltd., *Report on Edmonton Annexation Proposal*, (St. Albert, March 1980), p.i. Also see for Strathcona L.J. Sharpe, *Evaluation of Alternative Structures and a Proposal for Local Governance in the Edmonton Region*, (County of Strathcona, 1979).
[237] See Lionel D. Feldman and Katherine Graham, *Evaluation of Alternative*

The LAB report was released to the public in November, 1980. In the document the commisioners accepted the arguments put forward by the city and recommended an extension of Edmonton's boundaries in all directions. The 24 recommendations contained in Board Order 14,000 included provisions for increased representation on city council, guaranteed employment for municipal employees, the rationalization of water board jurisdictions, and the creation of a five mile wide Mutually Approved Development (MAD) area to surround the city and offer Edmonton a degree of land use control on its urbanizing periphery.[237]

In supporting its position the Board noted:

> This Board is satisfied that the City of Edmonton has established a reasonable prospect of an increased population moving into the area dominated by the City, and that its share of such increase will necessitate acquisition of jurisdiction over additional lands from adjoining territories. We are also satisfied that an esential function of municipal government is to plan for future development and, so far as possible, direct its course.[238]

As on previous occasions, a body independent of municipal bias had judged relative merits of the arguments advanced by jurisdictions in the affected territory and concluded that the boundaries of Edmonton should be expanded to include the urbanizing metropolitan area. Not since the McNally Royal Commission of 1956, however, had such an authoritative statement by impartial authorities been made. The commissioners recommended the inclusion of St. Albert in an expanded capital city and in Solomonic fashion recommended that the "built-up" area in the County of Strathcona be included while the remaining rural section be partitioned and assigned to the surrounding counties.

After a decade spent in a strategy of evasion, deflection and neglect, the Lougheed government was finally forced to make a decision. The LAB order granted Edmonton almost everthing it had requested. Not surprisingly, the jurisdictions affected by the decision expressed their total opposition to the scheme. The technical arguments were over, the Edmonton boundary dispute

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[237](cont'd)*Structures and a Proposal for Local Governance in the Edmonton Region*, (County of Strathcona: January, 1980), pp. 33-42. Comay Planning Consultants Ltd., pp. 29-36. L.J. Sharpe, p. 78.
[238] Board Order 14,000, *The City of Edmonton Annexation Application*, November, 1980, pp. 88-125.
[239] Ibid., p. 156.

clearly entered the open political arena.

Battling for their very existence, the County of Strathcona and the City of St. Albert commenced an aggressive lobbying effort. At the annual Progressive Conservative convention in the spring of 1981 opponents of the annexation decision succeeded in passing resolutions requiring successful plebiscites in all affected jurisdictions.[240] A resolution calling for the acceptance of the LAB report was resoundingly defeated.

To defuse the emotion, the matter was raised in the house by the government during the spring sitting. Without indicating any preference or particular policy on the issue, the Tories initiated debate through a government motion which simply stated: "Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly give consideration to the Local Authorities Board Order, Report and Recommendations on Annexation to the City of Edmonton."

If there were any doubts that the government would use its power under the amended LAB Act to alter the board order, they were quickly dispelled during the course of second reading debate. The Hon. Marvin Moore, Minister of Municipal Affairs introduced the motion and noted,

> for some months now our cabinet and government caucus have had under consideration this whole matter of whether or not you can move local political boundaries to do away completely with two municipalities; whether you can do that against the will of the people, with the proposal to them that it's for their economic good down the road. I want to simply say that when it comes to making these kinds of decisions members should recognize that national, international, and political boundaries of this province, this country, and the world, are not often decided by economics alone. Most likely those decisions are political and geographic decisions, or related more to geography than economics. If it were otherwise, Mr. Speaker, it could well be that the major boundary between the United States and Canada would run north and south rather than east and west. When it comes to a matter of economics, I should say as well that there are some - and we do it as individuals - who choose to be masters of a smaller house even though it may cost a little more to keep the roof fixed.[241]

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[240] The resolution submitted by the Sherwood Park constituency read, "Be it Resolved That the City of Edmonton's request for approval, by the Provincial Government, of its unnecessary, grandiose, highhanded and far reaching annexation proposals, be rejected quickly and forcefully, for if approved in their present form, the political, social, economical, and ecological consequences for our constituency will be devestating, and , in fact, may well destroy our constituency forever."

[241] Legislative Assembly of Alberta, *Hansard* 19th Legislature 3rd Session (20 May 1981), pp. 833-834.

MLAs expressed their agreement with the most politically acceptable portion of the Milvain Report. Of the 17 MLAs who spoke to the motion, there was unanimous acceptance of the finding that Edmonton should be granted a boundary adjustment that would guarantee enough land for industrial, commercial, and residential needs for at least 20 years. There was, however, no support for the inclusion of either St. Albert or Sherwood Park in an expanded Edmonton. While cabinet secrecy and caucus solidarity are practised to extreme lengths in Alberta, one could surmise that either weak support was offered in favor of Edmonton's boundary proposal or that any supporters of the city's case were quickly overruled.[242] Intensive lobbying efforts by those jurisdictions appeared, on the surface, to have their desired effect although there is no evidence to suggest that the provincial government ever intended to adopt the LAB report. As well, it has been previously pointed out that the PCs publicly favoured balanced growth in the province and that this implied a decentralization of both population and economic activity. Statements by Premier Lougheed and several cabinet ministers supported the view that the government hoped to "slow the growth of its two major cities."[243]

In June the provincial government finally released its metropolitan decision. Radically departing from the Milvain Report, the government ordered that 86,000 acres be added to Edmonton's existing territory while St. Albert retained its independent jurisdiction and the County of Strathcona lost only 19 percent of its coveted assessment base. Included in the government's decision was a secretly assembled 17,000 parcel of land that was not even considered in the LAB report. A new Edmonton Metropolitan Planning Region was to be established; the expanded city's representation on the 27 member authority would number nine. As well, the government's decision called for a new Regional Municipal Services Act which would provide for regional authorities with the power to own and operate regional facilities, with the power in effect

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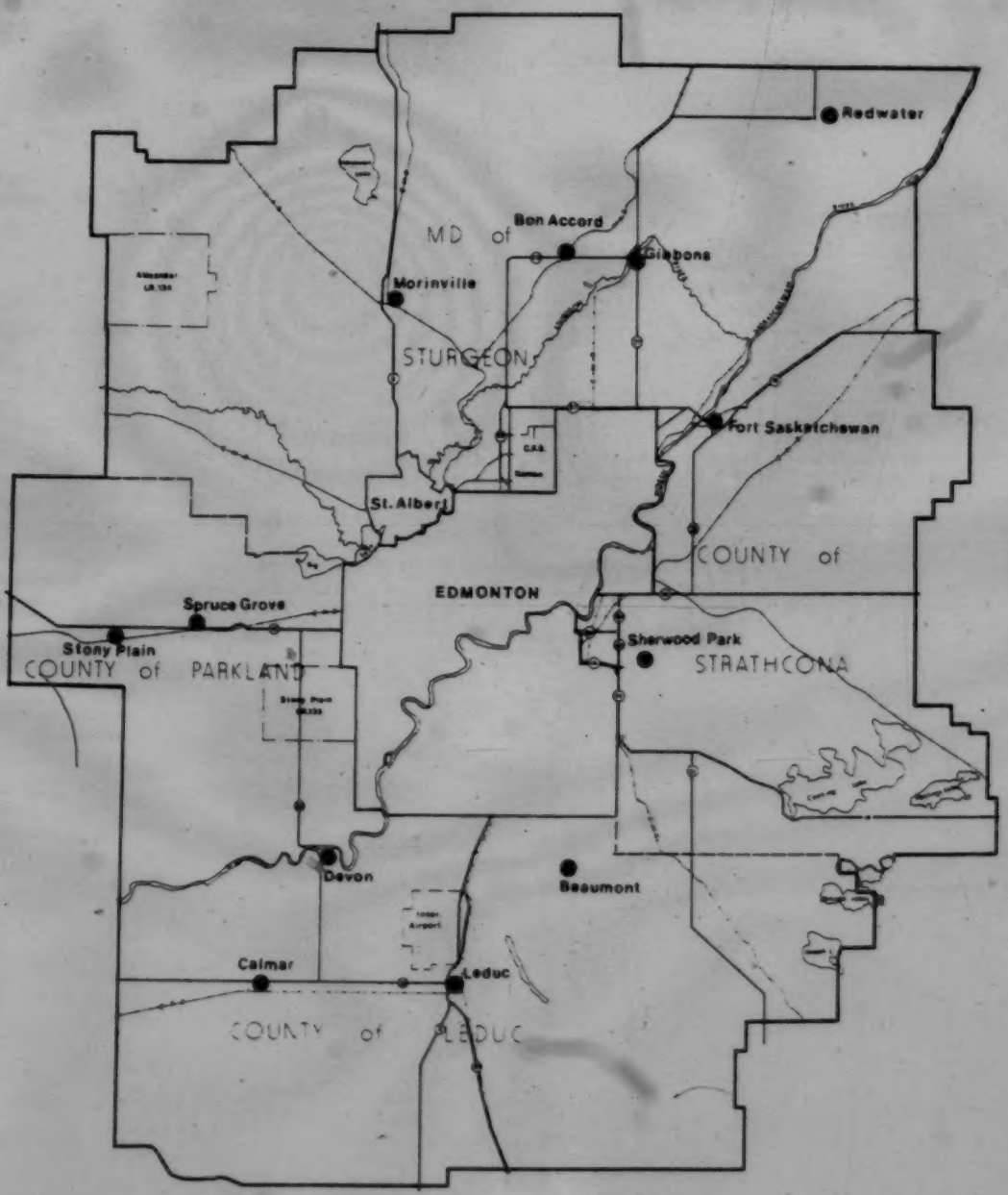
[242] During debate Neil Crawford, Attorney-General and former Edmonton alderman stated that he had not yet made up his mind on the annexation proposal! Legislative Assembly of Alberta, *Hansard* 19th Legislature 3rd Session (21 May 1981), p. 881.

[243] Masson, pp. 444 - 445.

JAN. 1982

EDMONTON METROPOLITAN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION



to expropriate Edmonton's utilities operations.

The 14 page government report cited 12 factors taken into consideration in reaching a decision:

1. The City of Edmonton's need for land to accomodate urban growth for the foreseeable future.
2. The importance of preserving agricultural land.
3. The effectiveness of a single municipal government covering the region recommended by the Local Authorities Board.
4. The consequences of the disappearance of independent municipal governments in St. Albert and the County of Strathcona.
5. The effect of apportioning the County of Strathcona to three different jurisdictions.
6. The impact of boundary changes upon the provision of services, including police and fire protection, transportation, public utilities, telephones, power and natural gas, education and social services.
7. The future planning of the Edmonton region under the existing system and the various changes suggested in representations to the Local Authorities Board.
8. The recommendations of the Local Authorities Board.
9. The impact of a boundary decision upon the ability of municipalities in the region to provide serviced land for affordable housing and nearby job opportunities for the people of the region.
10. The financial viability of municipalities and school districts under the existing structure, the Local Authorities Board recommendation and other options.
11. The considered views of Edmonton and area MLAs.
12. The desires of the citizens of all the municipal jurisdictions and the many representations made by councils and the public to the Local Authorities Board.[244]

The boundary adjustments took effect on January 1, 1982.

The government boasted that Edmonton's size would double as a result of their decision. In the final analysis, and in a comparative context, the decision amounted to little more than modest tinkering. Metropolitan Edmonton was to be governed by special purpose districts: by mid-1982 it was not even clear whether the city was to be a member of the utilities commission.[245] The planning and economic arguments that the city had used in convincing the LAB to recommend a unitary form of government were not accepted by the Lougheed cabinet. Edmonton was to be left at a pre-Toronto - 1954, pre-Winnipeg - 1961, pre-Vancouver - 1967 stage.

Again, in comparative terms, the final outcome was a poor reflection of the time, money, and expertise devoted to the annexation question. It will be remembered that in Toronto the provincial government approved an amended

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[244] Government of Alberta, *Report and Decision Concerning the Edmonton Annexation Application*, June, 1981, pp. 1-2.
[245] *Edmonton Journal*, September 14, 1982.

version of the Goldenberg Royal Commission and created one city and five boroughs from thirteen existing municipalities. More than one hundred thousand people were affected by that province's decision.[246] In 1971, the Manitoba provincial government radically reformed the structure of local government in the Winnipeg metropolitan area. Twelve municipalities were amalgamated to form Unicity Winnipeg and two hundred and fifty thousand suburban ratepayers had more than their local identities altered. In each case the number of people affected was greater than the combined population of St. Albert and Sherwood Park. Even in Vancouver, where it is acknowledged that only a weak form of area-wide government exists, it is provincial government officials who are credited with introducing the structure. Significantly, provincial governments have moved to strengthen the Greater Vancouver Regional District by a vertical transfer of functions and, despite the use of 'gentle imposition' to describe the process, they have behaved in a consistent and deliberate fashion.

In contrast with Ontario in the late 1970s where minority governments were unable to move dramatically with regional government reforms, in Alberta successive majority governments consistently deferred the articulation of a policy of metropolitan reform. The 1981 decision left the local governments in the area intact with only minimal disruption to economic and population bases. In essence, the fundamental issue was deferred once again.

F. Summation

As this chapter has indicated, the Conservatives, since their election in 1971, did not treat the Edmonton boundary question with any sense of urgency. Though the provincial response to the city's initiatives appeared superficially to be similar to that of the Socreds,[247] namely a matter of consumate indifference, the evidence suggests that underlying this attitude was a

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[246] Albert Rose, "Two decades of Metropolitan Government in Toronto: 1953 - 1973," *A Look to the North*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974), p. 39.

[247] The northeast land assembly in 1980-81 by the PCs was curiously reminicent of the Socred's Mill Woods land assembly, except in the latter instance senior municipal officials were involved and informed.

consistent and calculated effort on the part of the three successive ministers to defer a comprehensive policy statement on the form of government for the metropolitan area. Documents also support the hypothesis that the Lougheed government was determined not to approve a major boundary adjustment from the outset despite its insistence that formal hearings were necessary in order to provide the benefits of technical and expert advice.

Among the factors that contribute to an explanation of the failure of these administrations to act dramatically on the issue has been the preoccupation of the government with energy and constitutional matters. Political parties in Alberta have discovered that attacking the federal government is a more successful election technique than meddling in local government and Premier Lougheed has proven skillful in using this tactic. His campaigns of 1975 and 1979 focused on the external factor of the "Ottawa" government. During the 1979 campaign the only platform plank remotely related to municipalities was the announcement that, if elected, the PC Party would establish a $300 million Revolving Land Servicing Fund to help finance major underground water and sewer services in Alberta municipalities.[248] The government's own backbenchers didn't refrain from noting that just as provincial rights must be protected, independent municipal governments deserved their separate status.[249]

As well, there was a noticeable lack of support from within the government caucus for any ambitious reform of Edmonton's boundaries or for any other significant governmental reorganization. After the 1975 election the PCs held all 16 of Edmonton's seats and 8 of the MLAs were appointed to the cabinet. After the general election of 1979 ten of Edmonton's seventeen MLAs occupied front benches to no avail, from the city's perspective. The absence of any public support for Edmonton's designs by the city's members suggests at worst contempt for the city's machinations and, at best, indifference about these efforts on their part. Attempts, if any, from within the party to

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[248] *The Platform of the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party and its Candidates*, Alberta Provincial Election, 1979.
[249] Legislative Assembly of Alberta, *Hansard* 19th Legislature 3rd Session (22 May 1981), pp. 893-894.

lobby the key decision makers privately were obviously unsuccessful. The massive majority of the PCs, with its attendent strong rural representation, (less than one half of the MLAs in the government caucus represented urban constituencies) may also have contributed to the low priority placed on resolving Edmonton's boundary dispute by the permanent bureaucracy and the ministry.

Furthermore, it has been argued that the premier and several ministers have preferred a greater decentralization of population and economic activity in the province.[250] That Masson's hypothesis is well founded is at least partially substantiated by the city's own political calculus during the lobbying following the board order. For instance, of the ten 'personal' letters sent to each MLA about the issues, one dealt exclusively with the matter:

> The city of Edmonton fully supports the Provincial Government's policy of decentralization of growth and population. It does not believe that the unification of government recommended by the Local Authorities Board is inconsistent with that policy...Growth within the Inner Metropolitan Area, however, does not contribute to the Provincial policy of decentralization. Unfortunately...unmanaged and uncoordinated expansion is simply urban sprawl.[251]

Regrettably for city designs, its interpretation of provincial policy was not in step with the province's own sense of its direction.

The absence of any particular crisis, and the comparatively small scale of the suburban operations further served to prevent the boundary question from becoming a paramount concern to the government. It also fostered the belief that the matter was relatively inconsequential again given the paramount preoccupation of the constitution and energy matters. Political pressure came from Edmonton's city council and administration, but there was also a widespread lack of popular support for any proposals advanced which advocated integration. This was in sharp contrast to the predictable vocal and coordinated opposition expressed by residents and officials of the outlying jurisdictions. This organized opposition might well have been strong enough to defeat the Conservative members from St. Albert and Sherwood Park, anathema to a premier who had seriously campaigned for a third term with the slogan

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[250] Masson, pp. 444-447.
[251] City of Edmonton, Annexation Project, Information Bulletin "Edmonton Area Unification and Decentralization," March, 1981.

"79 in '79". Politically, the Tories had much to lose and nothing to gain in approving Edmonton's application. The absence of a decisive reorganization endeavor does not infer an absence of strategy; the government's obstinate deferrals and shrewd indifference were indeed carefully calculated.

V. Edmonton and the Strategy of Neglect

In this case study of local government reform efforts in the Edmonton metropolitan area we have sought to determine what strategy, if any, has been employed by Alberta provincial governments. To this end, the response of successive Alberta administrations to repeated requests for an expansion of the boundaries and jurisdiction of its capital city has been examined in the comparative context of Canadian and international approaches. Recommendations in favour of an integration of the Edmonton metropolitan area emerged from a variety of sources, including a royal commission, a task force, a lengthy and detailed hearing of the Local Authorities Board, specially hired consultants, and the staff of the city of Edmonton. Each considered the alternatives we have examined, each recommended unitary government, and each has met a singular lack of success in persuading the province to budge in any significant manner. While a casual observer might conclude in the light of other provincial experience that a policy vacuum persisted in this case for more than twenty-five years, it was hypothesized that a strategy must have existed for Alberta given the importance attached to metropolitan organization as a policy arena in each of the other provinces. The evidence presented above has shown that there was indeed a policy and that was simply, and latterly by design, to refrain from settling the jurisdictional question conclusively, a possibility permitted by the absence of crisis in Edmonton's metropolitan relations. Modest incremental tinkering rather than fundamental change has been the consistent game plan.

In chapter one we considered the question of metropolitan reorganization and outlined various options available to local authorities in reconciling area-wide problems. Examples included the experiences of jurisdictions in Great Britain and the United States. It was recognized, however, that despite these models any discussion of local government reform in Canada must take into consideration several constraints, particularly municipal constitutional subserviance and fiscal dependence on the provincial level of government.

The principal Canadian experiences with metropolitan reorganization were considered in chapter two, along with an identification of the factors which led to the successful integration of the country's largest urban areas. It was demonstrated, without exception, that provincial governments in Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia, through conscious strategies, have found it necessary to play a significant and positive role in bringing about a redefinition of the boundaries and jurisdictions of their major cities since World War II. It has been an issue area which could not be ignored. Among the factors that have been advanced to explain the impetus to the provincial initiatives are: crises in service delivery, the ideology of the government in power, and the designs of a determined bureaucracy. While none of these circumstances has been shown to be particularly applicable to the Alberta case, with the possible exception of the last, the pattern revealed elsewhere does raise the question as to why two political parties and seven consecutive legislatures have failed to respond in a decisive fashion to consistent pressure from a determined city bureaucracy for a consolidation of local governments in the metropolitan region.

To answer this question, the response of Alberta governments in the post-war era to recommendations for reorganization has been traced. On the basis of documents, interviews, and newspaper accounts it has been argued that the existence of a consistent strategy of benign indifference and calculated neglect best explains why neither the Social Credit nor the Progressive Conservative governments, respectively, did respond decisively to efforts aimed at integrating the metropolitan area.

The ideological commitment of the Socreds to local autonomy and the party's strong rural bias left them ill-equipped to deal with the question of urban governance. The government set aside the findings of the McNally Royal Commission in 1956 and instead created a regional planning commission, a measure which ultimately failed to reduce jurisdictional disputes in the region. As well, it pondered a proposal for sharing industrial tax revenue. Despite government claims that the program would ameliorate fiscal imbalances, the School Foundation Program Fund which emerged did not suceed in reducing

tension between local governments in the region. The clever inactivity of the Socred years forced Edmonton to include built-up, yet tax-poor, areas within its corporate limits without the benefit of the prized industrial land on its eastern border. The Manning government was equally unresponsive to the recommendations of the Hanson Report which appeared in 1968, although by this time the party was in disarray. The question of Manning's successor had yet to be determined and the portfolio of Municipal Affairs changed hands a remarkable four times in less than two years. It was hardly an environment which lent itself to a critical analysis of a marginal policy problem, that is, of local government in the capital region.

The Progressive Conservative treatment of the Edmonton metropolitan area has resembled that of their predecessors. The record shows that despite their overwhelming parliamentary majorities and their attendant strong urban support (including that of former city councillors and their organizers) they have found it unnecessary to develop a comprehensive plan for local governance in the region. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that this appearance of indifference was a carefully calculated stategy on the part of the Conservatives not to alter the status quo thereby retaining the support of the local leaders and the residents of the communities surrounding Edmonton, and probably the majority of Edmonton residents as well.[252] Rather than resolve a politically difficult but low priority issue they moved early in their term to defer the question with the establishment of a Boundaries Advisory Committee. Edmonton declined to present its case before the committee and instead pushed for a cabinet decision, recognizing that a resolution of the boundary controversy which it perceived was, in the final analysis, a political decision. When Edmonton finally decided to pursue its goal through the LAB (a route consistently advised by both Socred and PC governments) and won its case, the provincial government used its discretionary power to overturn the quasi-judicial board's principal

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[252] In a study commissioned by the Office of the Mayor, the issue of 'annexation' ranked fourteenth in a list of fourteen concerns mentioned by the residents surveyed, being a matter of interest to only 1.4 percent of respondents. Population Research Laboratory, *Citizens' Concerns in Edmonton* (Edmonton: Office of the Mayor, January, 1979) p. 34.

recommendations. While the city was granted a boundary expansion, the two communities of St. Albert and Sherwood Park retained their independence. Edmonton did not achieve the absolute control it sought over the metropolitan area nor was any other politically accountable regional government set in place.

An examination of the Lougheed government's decision shows many similarities to the response of Social Credit administrations. In both cases the government of the day granted territory to Edmonton by way of land-banking schemes. Each chose to address the question of planning in the region through the establishment of regional planning structures which ultimately neglected to recognize Edmonton's impact on the region governmentally, fiscally or in population terms. Each rejected the comparative experiences of other metropolitan centres in Canada which had led independent tribunals to recommend unitary government. That the City of Edmonton was unable to demonstrate any public popularity for its designs further removed political pressure upon the province to deviate from its approach. Naturally, other affected municipalities in the area were opposed to unification, just as they would have been in any other metropolitan centre in Canada. But here, there was no centripital pressure. As well, we have noted an absence of crisis in regional servicing which, in other jurisdictions, did serve as an impetus to structural change.

Despite the provincial intent, it is unlikely that the 1981 decision will put to rest the planning, servicing, and fiscal problems of the local governments in the region. The LAB, after their detailed assessment of the case, agreed with Edmonton's position that the city should be given planning authority over the region.

> We are satisfied that there exists an Inner Metropolitan area, comprised of the City of Edmonoton, the City of St. Albert, the Hamlet of Sherwood Park, and the industrial developments which they adjoin and embrace. It is also clear that the City of Edmonton dominates the Inner Metropolitan area and furnishes the main driving force behind its future development.
>
> It follows that in the best interest of the whole community which constitutes the Inner Metropolitan area, it should be brought under a single municipal authority. In our view, the City of Edmonton has discharged the onus upon it of establishing, as a reasonable conclusion, that it needs land for expansion and needs extended

> jurisdiction to discharge its duty to the community as it exists and will exist in the future.[253]

The province not only disagreed but also retained the governmentally fragmented metropolitan area. Moreover it determined that Edmonton city council could not dominate the regional planning process by keeping it severely under-represented on the new regional planning commission which it proposed. Nor is there any indication that the city, the sole provider of water and sewage treatment in the region, will be invited to join a proposed new regional utilities board. In short, when it became politically impossible to ignore, postpone, and delay the question of annexation longer--because the city had forced the issue-- the province was forced to find another urban growth policy, as the other provinces had done. That it was built on the lowest possible common denominators will in all likelihood be unfortunate for the region. But, more importantly, what is the lesson from all this?

In ideological terms, conservatively inclined provincial governments would not be expected to undertake drastically upsetting reforms in the absence of severe provocation: "Existing forms [of metro government] persist largely because they serve the interests of dominant economic and social groups who possess the political capacity to retain the *status quo*."[254] Both Social Credit and Progressive Conservative governments have been very much the custodians of public office in the interests of those groups dominant in Alberta's society and politics.[255] For the latter, the local political system worked reasonably well. In this light, the apparent inattention to the Edmonton metropolitan question revealed in more than 25 years of incremental adjustment by the Social Credit and Progressive Conservative governments marks instead the conscious avoidance of the issues of comprehensive reorganization. That behaviour betrays the basic strategies of benign indifference and calculated neglect.

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[253] Local Authorites Board, *Report and Decision Concerning the Edmonton Annexation Application*, pp. 156-157.
[254] On the importance of ideology see James Lightbody, "The Reform of a Metropolitan Government." p. 490.
[255] John Richards and Larry Pratt, *Prairie Capitalism: Power and Influence in the New West* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1979), p.11; 215-250.

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